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Montana Snowmobiling Guide

Trail Systems, Rentals,
Services, Lodging and
Activities



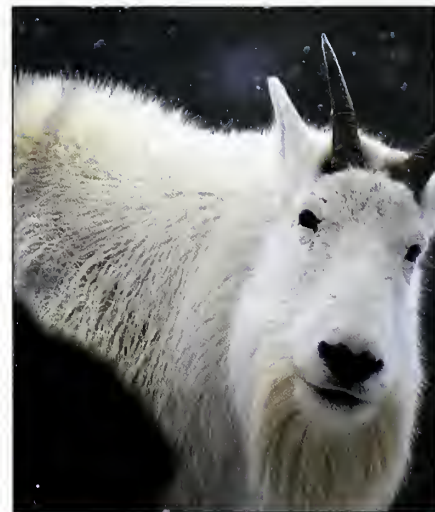
Montana



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Montana. Big powder

K. Takata photo



Mountain Goat / W. Mumford photo

The Northern Rocky Mountains are more than a range of pretty faces. Especially in winter. In Montana, we glide up them on snow-white trails groomed just for us. We play in their giant powder bowls. We touch clouds at 8,000 feet and identify peaks a hundred miles away. We catch glimpses of fox and mink, elk and moose. We burnish our winter faces with sunlight on snow. We breathe air that no one has breathed and explore backcountry we're certain no one has seen. In Montana, we embrace winter because it transforms our Northern Rockies into powder-perfect playgrounds that refresh our spirit and renew our outlook. We invite you to join us because we have so much to share.

Nearly 3,000 miles of snowmobile trails are marked and groomed annually, making Montana the top snowmobile destination in the country! We have trails that will take you to the geysers and hotpots of Yellowstone National Park. Trails that will open up views of Montana's most magnificent backcountry. Easy-going trails that will take you on scenic loop

er country.

tours of backcountry lakes, hot springs and ghost towns. And challenging trails that will test your skills and endurance at skytop elevations. Since 1977, when Montana set aside a portion of its gasoline tax for development of snowmobile facilities, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, the Montana Snowmobile Association and local snowmobile clubs have worked together to create this vast trail network, most of it on national forest lands.

National forests comprise 17 million acres—nearly one-fifth—of Montana's land area, primarily in the western third of the state. More than three million acres have been preserved as wilderness. These designated wilderness areas are closed to motorized travel, but many more millions of acres of national forest lands remain open to snowmobilers. Because of its vast public lands, Montana has some of the longest connecting trails in the nation, making it possible to ride all day without crossing a highway or seeing a car. Small, friendly towns along the trail make fun stops for gas, food and lodging. Active, well-organized clubs



welcome visitors, provide guide service and keep the focus on fun with activities that range from hill climbs and poker runs to steak fries and pancake breakfasts.

Montana's downhill and cross country ski resorts offer a day off the trail and so much more—world-class skiing, guided ski tours into Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, wildlife photography tours, sleigh rides, ice skating, horseback riding, restaurants that range from ranch-style to gourmet, friendly casinos and bars and natural hot springs pools to soothe "new" muscles at the end of the day.

Plan to spend some time in one of Montana's larger cities or towns before or after you hit the trail. You'll enjoy our museums and galleries, shopping and restaurants, winter carnivals, festivals and world-class events like Butte's national and international speed skating competition, West Yellowstone's Fall Training Camp for the U.S. Nordic and Biathlon teams and the Governor's Cup 500-Mile Sled Dog Race. Winter is a peak season in Montana, and we celebrate it every chance we get. Just for fun, we hope you will join us.

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Sleighride / Travel Montana photo



On the cover, Mt. Cannon, Glacier National Park / W. Mumford photo



Getting there.



R. Hamilton Smith photo



Getting to and through Big Sky country is half the fun of a Montana vacation. The landscape is unspoiled, the views unforgettable. If you are driving from the east, the views across Montana's plains will stretch your eyes as well as your imagination. If you are traveling from the west, range after range of Rocky Mountains will keep your attention skyward.

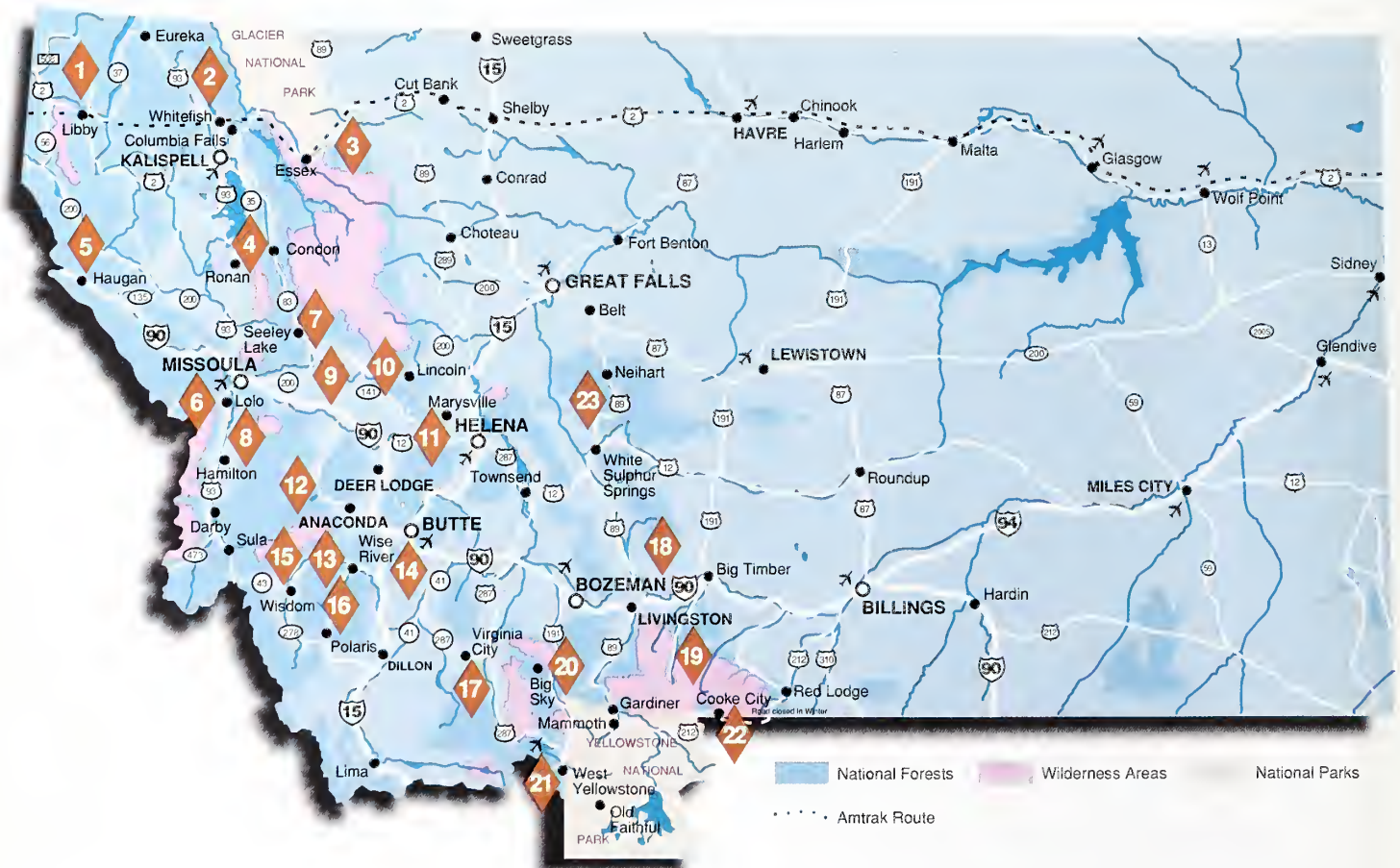
In a state as big as Montana, highways are important and they are well maintained throughout the year. In winter, highways are plowed and sanded regularly. Motorists can get weather information and up-to-the-minute road reports on all radio stations every morning, with updates broadcast throughout the day. Road reports are also available by calling 1-800-332-6171 in-state or 406-444-6339 from outside Montana. For road condi-

tions within a 100-mile radius of each of the following cities, dial:

Billings—252-2806
Bozeman—586-1313
Butte—494-3666
Glendive—365-2314
Great Falls—453-1605
Havre—265-1416
Helena—444-6354
Kalispell—755-4949
Lewistown—538-7445
Miles City—232-2099
Missoula—728-8553
Wolf Point—653-1692

If you are calling from outside Montana, dial Area Code 406 first.

Major commercial airlines serve Montana cities of Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell and Missoula, with good commuter connections to Glasgow, Glendive, Havre, Lewistown, Miles City, Sidney and Wolf Point.

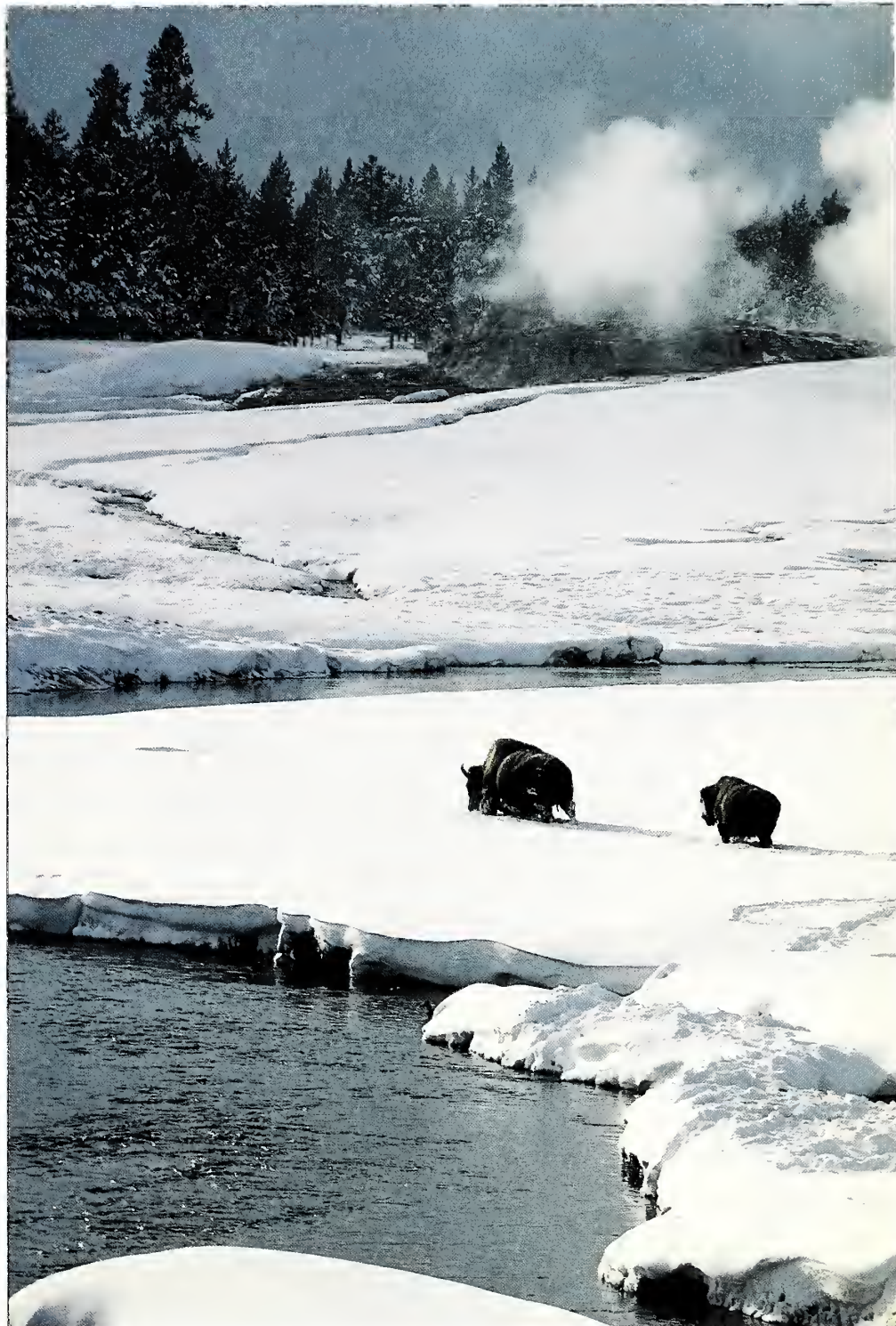


Amtrak parallels US 2 across northern Montana, providing daily east-west service to Libby, Whitefish, West Glacier, East Glacier, Essex and points east. For reservations and information, dial 1-800-872-7245.

Montana is a big state—the nation's fourth largest—with widely varied landscapes and physical features. To help familiarize visitors with Montana's many vacation opportunities, the state is divided into six vacation regions, which are described on the following pages. Most of Montana's nearly 3,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, downhill and cross country ski resorts and 17 million acres of national forest are located in the mountains of western Montana—the area covered by Glacier, Gold West and Yellowstone countries. But don't overlook the winter opportunities and vacation attractions in Russell, Missouri River and Custer countries. One of Montana's most popular winter sports areas (King's Hill), two of its ice fishing hot spots (Fort Peck Lake and Nelson Reservoir) and the site of the nation's most celebrated Indian battle (Custer Battlefield), are located in central and eastern Montana. Use the listings and descriptions that follow to help set your tracks through Powder Perfect Montana.

For additional travel information, dial toll free 1-800-541-1447. In Montana, dial 444-2654.

Bison along Firehole River, Yellowstone National Park / G. Wuerthner photo



Glacier

COUNTRY



Mountains, mountains everywhere. Mountains that crown the continent and divide the oceans. Mountains that provide wild sanctuary for grizzly and elk,

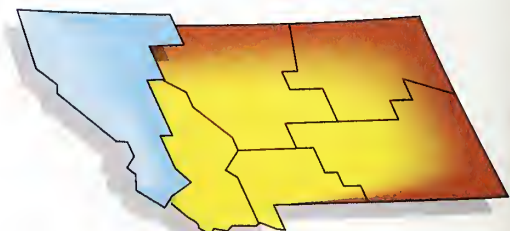
bald eagles and bighorn sheep. Mountains that grab eastbound moisture from the Pacific and turn it into swirls and layers of weightless, white powder. Glacier Country is high, mountain country. It is Montana's northwest corner, home of Glacier National Park, large and lovely Flathead Lake, the wild and scenic Flathead River, the National Bison Range, the Blackfeet and Flathead Indian reservations and scenic Bitterroot Valley. Here too, are millions of acres of national forest, hundreds of miles of groomed snowmobile trails, eight national wilderness areas and dozens of trout-filled lakes that freeze over for ice fishing in winter. With its network of snowmobile trails, destination downhill and cross country ski resorts and non-stop winter sporting events, Glacier Country is a popular destination for winter recreationists. With its sophisticated cities and lakeside communities, its University of Montana campus in Missoula, its love of history and the arts, fine restaurants, theaters, shops and malls, Glacier Country is a great place to be, winter or summer, inside or out.

LEGEND



HELENA

- Lincoln
- Towns
- National Forests
- Wilderness Areas
- Continental Divide
- Lakes and Waterways
- RES.
- Indian Reservations
- National Parks
- 15 Interstate Marker
- 100 U.S. Numbered Marker
- 20 State Route Marker
- ✈ Major Airports
- ✱ Ghost Town or Early Mining Camp
- ⚡ Ski Area
- 2 Snowmobile Area



1 LIBBY

Travel to Montana's extreme northwest corner and leave the rest of the world behind. High in the Cabinet and Purcell mountains, you can ride forever and see even farther. Ride across snow bridges and play in skytop bowls and spring drifts that measure 20 feet high! Skim an icy lake or explore turn-of-the-century trapper cabins. Drop a line through the ice on nearby Lake Koocanusa and catch your fill of kokanee salmon. Or test your ski legs at nearby Turner Mountain ski area. Headquarters for this year-round recreation area is the Scandinavian town of Libby, home of miners, loggers and all who love the outdoors. If you're looking for the "real" Montana, you're likely to find it here, or in the neighboring towns of Troy, Eureka or Yaak. You may run into a crowd at a saloon called the Dirty Shame but the only obstacle you're likely to encounter on the trail is an occasional moose.

Trails: Choose from 135 miles of groomed trails on the Kootenai National Forest. There's rugged Keeler-Rattle Trail system with its magnificent views of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness and proposed Scotchman Peak Wilderness; the Purcell Mountains with 60 miles of loop trails and play areas, all near Turner Mountain ski area and the Pete Creek Trail to mountain bowls and alpine lakes.

Season:

Thanksgiving to mid-April.

Elevation:

Libby, 2,086'; trails to 5,800'.

Snow Conditions:

Deep powder until February; slightly packed the rest of the season.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 3' on the level to 8' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

30 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service, plus a full range of food and lodging facilities are available in Libby. Lodging and food are also available in Troy. Limited services are available in Eureka and Yaak. Guided tours can be arranged through the Libby Sno-Kats Snowmobile Club.



Bighorn Sheep / W. Mumford photo

Events: Libby Sno-Kats Drag Race and Snodeo, 2nd week in January; Sno-Kats endurance rides and moonlight rides are held regularly throughout the season.

Nearby Attractions: Turner Mountain ski area; kokanee salmon fishing on Lake Koocanusa; several cross country ski trails and unlimited backcountry skiing.

Location: Libby is located on US 2 in extreme northwestern Montana. Nearest airports are Kalispell, 90 miles east on US 2, and Spokane, 130 miles west on US 2.

Maps & Information: Libby Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1263 Highway 37, Libby, MT 59923, (406) 293-7741; Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, 1437 N. Highway 2, Troy, MT 59935, (406) 295-4693; Libby Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 704, Libby, MT 59923, (406) 293-3832; Libby Sno-Kats Snowmobile Club, P.O. Box 1180, Libby, MT 59923.

Desert Mountain Trail / W. Mumford photo



2 KALISPELL

For a complete winter vacation, it's hard to beat northwestern Montana's scenic Flathead Valley. Within an hour's drive of its hub city of Kalispell, there is unlimited snowmobiling on the Flathead National Forest, downhill and nordic skiing at The Big Mountain ski resort, ski touring in Glacier National Park and ice fishing in some of Montana's most scenic settings. Take your pick of four groomed trail systems that cover 220 miles, plus hundreds of miles of ungroomed trails. Choose the popular Canyon Creek Trail that climbs up the backside of Big Mountain and delivers you to the Summit House in time for lunch and the best of alpine scenery. Or take the trails less traveled to backcountry lakes. Sample the good life at fine restaurants and shops in Kalispell, Whitefish and at The Big Mountain Resort. And celebrate winter at fun-filled events throughout the area. There's the Whitefish Winter Carnival, Cabin Fever Days and snowmobile, sled dog or ski races nearly every weekend.

Trails: Canyon Creek to The Big Mountain begins north of Columbia Falls accessing trails that lead to play areas and hill climbs before crossing Werner Peak to connect with the Olney Creek and Taylor Creek trails. Olney Creek, north of Whitefish, includes rides to Upper Whitefish Lake, Red Meadow Lake and scenic Stryker Loop. Between Hungry Horse and the Great Bear Wilderness is the Desert Mountain area and south of Bigfork, between Flathead Lake and Swan Lake, is the Crane Mountain area. Avalanche dangers exist

in some areas and may result in road closures.

Season:

Mid-December through April.

Elevation:

Kalispell, 2,956'; trails to 7,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Deep powder through January; best riding from mid-February to mid-April on hardpack snow.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 3' on the level to 10'-12' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

25-35 degrees.

Services:

The Flathead Valley offers a full range of visitor services, including snowmobile sales, service and rentals. Guided tours may be arranged through the Flathead Snowmobile Association. Lodging facilities range from small, independent motels to deluxe accommodations at The Big Mountain and a convention center in Kalispell.

Events: Whitefish Winter Carnival, 1st weekend in February; Montana Cabin Fever Days in Martin City, Hungry Horse and Coram, 2nd weekend in February and a number of club-sponsored races and social events.

Nearby Attractions: Glacier National Park; The Big Mountain ski resort; Flathead Lake.

Location: Kalispell is at the junction of US 93 & US 2 in northwestern Montana. Fly into Kalispell or drive US 93 north-south or US 2 east-west. AMTRAK has daily east-west rail service to Whitefish, 15 miles north.

Maps & Information: Flathead National Forest, 1935 3rd Ave. East, Kalispell, MT 59901, (406) 755-5401; Flathead Snowmobile Association, P.O. Box 5041, Kalispell, MT 59903, (406) 756-6139; Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce, 15 Depot Loop, Kalispell, MT 59901, (406) 752-6166; Whitefish Chamber of Commerce, 525 Third St., Whitefish, MT 59937, (406) 862-3501.

3 CUT BANK

For those who like to take winter head-on, come test your mettle at northwestern Montana's Marias Pass trail complex. Straddling the Continental Divide, these trails are rugged and remote at elevations of 5,000 to 8,000 feet. Snowmobilers will find their skytop views of Glacier National Park, the Great Bear Wilderness and the Blackfeet Indian Nation irresistible. A wide range of riding is available, from novice to expert, on 45 miles of groomed trails and another 35 miles of ungroomed trails. Guides are advisable on some of the trails. Steep slopes and sudden storms make for extreme weather conditions and avalanche danger. The Cut Bank Snogers maintain a portable relief station on the trail and a U.S. Forest Service guard station is staffed intermittently on weekends for information and safety. If you've never ridden these trails, join the Snogers on one of their regular club outings and let them guide you on one of Montana's most thrilling and scenic rides. Some of Montana's finest ski touring is in the immediate Glacier Park area.

Trails: Popular trails originating at Marias Pass are Two Medicine, Skyland and Pike Creek. These are rugged trails in the Lewis & Clark and Flathead national forests that cross the Continental Divide south of Glacier Park and north of the Great Bear Wilderness. There are additional ungroomed trails in the area.



B. Sallaz photo

Season:

December through April.

Elevation:

Marias Pass, 5,280'; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Best in February-March after snowpack settles.

Snow Depth:

3'-5' at Marias Pass; 8' and more at higher elevations.

Average Daytime Temperature:

-10 to +10 degrees in December and January; 10-30 degrees in February and March.

Services:

Snowmobile service and rentals, lodging and food are available at Essex, 15 miles west on US 2; lodging and food at East Glacier, 12 miles east.

Events: Organized outings with the Cut Bank Snogers Snowmobile Club, mid-month, December through April; Poker Run, mid-February; Fun Day, mid-March.

Nearby Attractions: Glacier National Park and the Great Bear Wilderness accessible by non-motorized travel; Blackfeet Indian Nation.

Location: Marias Pass is midway between Cut Bank and Kalispell on US 2. Nearest airports are Kalispell, 65 miles west on US 2, and Great Falls, 150 miles southeast on US 89. Amtrak has daily east-west service with stops in Cut Bank, East Glacier and Essex.

Maps & Information: Cut Bank Snogers, P.O. Box 301, Cut Bank, MT 59427; Cut Bank Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1243, Cut Bank, MT 59427; Lewis & Clark National Forest, 1101 15th St. N., Box 871, Great Falls, MT 59403, (406) 791-7700; Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Box 340, Choteau, MT 59422, (406) 466-5341.



S. Bly photo

4 MISSION MOUNTAINS

Few people are content merely to look at the Mission Mountains. Maybe more than any other mountain range in Montana, these jagged peaks have a magnetic pull that creates a compelling urge to get closer. Snowmobilers can satisfy their need to get into the Missions on a trail system that starts just east of Flathead Lake and goes all the way to the top of the range. On top, the Boulder Trail connects with extensive play areas and hill climbs and provides expansive views of Flathead Lake, The Big Mountain ski resort and the Mission and Swan valleys. To the south, the less developed Jocko Lake Trail starts east of Arlee, crosses the Missions and drops into the Seeley Lake area. Visitors are advised to join the Mission Mountain Snowmobile Club on one of its weekly outings to become familiar with the trails since both include large ungroomed areas. Because the trails are on the Flathead Indian Reservation, snowmobilers need special recreation permits that are widely available at gas stations and convenience stores on the reservation.

Trails: The Boulder Trail starts just off Highway 35 near Finley Point on Flathead Lake; the first 10 miles are groomed to the top of the range, where the trail connects with nearly 60 miles of ungroomed trails through forest openings. The ungroomed Jocko Lake Trail provides a 35-mile ride over the Missions that connects with groomed trails on the Seeley Lake side.

Season:

Early December to April.

Elevation:

Ronan, 3,200'; trails to 7,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow through February; hard-pack until the end of the season.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 10' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperatures:

25 to 35 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service are available in Ronan; the nearest rentals are in Kalispell and Columbia Falls. Guided tours may be arranged through the Mission Mountain Snowmobile Club in Ronan. A wide variety of food and lodging services are available throughout the Mission and Flathead valleys.

Events: Weekly Sunday outings are organized by the Mission Mountain Snowmobile Club; the club's spring picnic and poker run is mid-March in the Boulder area.

Nearby Attractions: Ice fishing for mackinaw and salmon on Flathead Lake; historic St. Ignatius Mission; National Bison Range; Mission Mountain Wilderness; The Big Mountain ski resort; ski touring in Glacier National Park; the lively Flathead Valley hub city of Kalispell and the always interesting university town of Missoula.

Location: Ronan is located between Missoula and Kalispell on US 93 in western Montana. Nearest airports are Missoula, 55 miles south, and Kalispell, 65 miles north.

Maps & Information: Mission Mountain Snowmobile Club, 112 Main Street S.W., Ronan, MT 59864, (406) 676-5000.

5 HAUGAN

Loop trails, open meadows and parks, wildlife, and best of all, very little traffic. There aren't many places like this left, so bring the family to Lookout Pass in northwestern Montana because this is a family kind of place. Trails begin right off Interstate 90, where you're as likely to see a herd of deer or elk as another party of snowmobilers. Snowmobilers in the Lookout Pass area enjoy 60 miles of groomed trails and many more miles of ungroomed trails, many of which cross the Montana border and drop into neighboring Idaho. There's downhill skiing on weekends at Lookout Pass ski area and friendly roadside stops in Haugan, Saltese and St. Regis. You won't be gambling on a good time if you show up in late February for the Super Poker Ride, with a guaranteed pot of \$1000!

Trails: Popular groomed trails in the Lolo National Forest are Ford Hill/Old Mullan Pass, Packer Creek/Randolph Creek, Packer Creek/Timber Creek, Norpac and Milwaukee/Dominion. All are easily accessible from I-90 and connect with several more miles of ungroomed trails. For the most part, these are easy-to-intermediate trails that follow waterline routes and provide loop tours with access to meadows and play areas.

Season:

November to April.

Elevation:

Lookout Pass, 4,725'; trails to 5,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Good snowpack throughout the season with best riding mid-January through February.

Snow Depth:

3'-8'.

Average Daytime Temperature:

30-35 degrees.

Services:

Fuel, oil, food and lodging are available in the nearby towns of Haugan, Saltese and St. Regis. Snowmobile sales and service are not available in the immediate area.

Winter in the Mission Mountains / Alan & Sandy Carey photo



Events: Organized outings with the Montana Nightriders Snowmobile Club on Saturdays; poker rides once a month; Super Poker Ride, late February.

Nearby Attractions: Lookout Pass ski area; Lincoln's Silver \$ Bar.

Location: Interstate 90 at Montana-Idaho border in northwestern Montana. Nearest airports are Missoula, 90 miles east on I-90 and Spokane, 110 miles west.

Maps & Information: Montana Nightriders Snowmobile Club, Box 242, Haugan, MT 59842; Lincoln's Silver \$ Bar & Restaurant, Haugan, MT 59842, (406) 678-4242; Superior Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, P.O. Box 460, Superior, MT 59872, (406) 822-4233.

6 LOLO PASS

Lewis and Clark were among the earliest visitors to the Lolo Pass area of western Montana. Searching the Rockies for passage to the Pacific Ocean, the expedition crossed the Bitterroot Mountains here in 1805 and again in 1806 on their return trip east. At Lolo Hot Springs, visitors today can enjoy the same soothing waters that bathed the weary members of that famed expedition 185 years ago. Starting either at Lolo Hot Springs or at the Lolo Pass winter sports area, seven miles west, snowmobilers can conduct their own modern-day exploration, using 150 miles of groomed, connecting trails in the Lolo and Clearwater national forests. There is also a network of groomed nordic trails starting at Lolo Pass. Two downhill ski areas, about an hour from Lolo Pass, make this one of Montana's most popular winter sports areas. Gateway to it all is Missoula, home of the University of Montana and cultural star of western Montana.

Trails: A series of interconnecting loop trails straddle two national forests on the Montana-Idaho border. East Fork, Lost Park, Elk Meadows, Moose Ridge, Cooper Creek and Wagon Mountain are just some of the trails that lead deep into the heart of the Bitterroot Range, with lots of meadows and play areas along the way.



Coyote / Alan & Sandy Carey photo

Season:

Mid-December through April.

Elevation:

Missoula, 3,200'; Lolo Hot Springs, 4,160'; trails to 5,900'.

Snow Conditions:

Western Montana's pacific northwest climate makes hardpack snow throughout most of the season.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 1'-3' on the level to 12'-15' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Mid-20s.

Services:

Food, lodging and RV camping are available at Lolo Hot Springs. A full range of visitor services, including snowmobile sales and service, are available in Missoula. Rentals are available in Hamilton, one hour south of Lolo Hot Springs on US 93.

Events: Snowmobile Sale, Missoula, 1st weekend in December; Poker runs, February and March; Winter Star Fest, fun events throughout January in Missoula and at Montana Snowbowl and Marshall ski areas; Foresters' Ball, University of Montana, late January; college basketball, University of Montana, January-March; Montana State Winter Expo, top statewide fair entries & exhibits in Missoula, Presidents' Weekend in February.

Nearby Attractions: Montana Snowbowl and Marshall downhill ski areas; Lewis & Clark Trail; National Bison Range; Rattlesnake and Selway Bitterroot wilderness areas; University of Montana; Montana Repertory Theatre; Missoula Children's Theatre; Fort Missoula; Aerial Fire Depot; Marcus Daly Mansion; St. Francis Xavier Church; St. Mary's and St. Ignatius missions.

Location: Lolo Pass winter sports area is on US 12 at the Montana-Idaho border, 45 miles southwest of Missoula. Nearest airport is Missoula.

Maps & Information: Missoula Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Building 24A, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59801, (406) 329-3750 or 3814; Powell Ranger District, Clearwater National Forest, Lolo, MT 59847, (208) 942-3113.

7 SEELEY LAKE

Tucked between the Mission Mountains and the Swan Range on scenic Highway 83, Seeley Lake is one of western Montana's most popular year-round recreation areas. Boats and bicycles are commonly seen here in the summer. But as the snow piles high in winter, snowmobiles are the best way to get around. Starting right from town, snowmobilers can choose from 15 popular groomed trails providing 300 miles of riding in the Lolo National

Forest. Fanning out in nearly every direction are trails to scenic lookouts, cozy lodges, cafes and backcountry lakes for ice fishing. These trails are diverse but they share a common trait ... surrounded by national forest, lakes and mountain ranges, they offer the best in alpine scenery. Winter is a peak season here and residents celebrate it every chance they get at festive events for snowmobilers, skiers and sled dog mushers. With a population of 2,000, Seeley Lake is big enough to provide the services you need and small enough to provide them with a smile.

Trails: Popular trails include **Double Arrow Lookout**, with its scenic views of the Swan Range and Clearwater Valley; **Elsina Lake**, site of Sunday cookouts with the Seeley Lake Driftriders Snowmobile Club; **Seeley Lake-Ovando**, a favorite for those who like to dine and dash; **Marshall Lake**, a scenic 15-mile loop and **Holland Lake**, a difficult, high-elevation ride that rewards its finishers with a friendly lodge and cabins on a beautiful lake.

Season:

Mid-December to April.

Elevation:

Seeley Lake, 4,000'; trails to 7,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder, early season; turning to packed powder.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 3' on the level to 12' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Mid-to high 20s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales, service and rentals, plus lodging and food are available in Seeley Lake. Limited services are available on the trail. Guided tours can be arranged through the Seeley Lake Driftriders Club.

Events: Yamafest, 3 days of snowmobile races and social events, mid-January; Seeley Lake 200 Sled Dog Race, last weekend in January; OSCR Nordic Races, first weekend in February; Governor's Cup 500-Mile Sled Dog Race with mandatory 8-hr. layover in Seeley Lake, mid-February; Snowmobilavous with games, poker runs and food, Presidents' Weekend in February.

Nearby Attractions: Ice fishing for trout, salmon and bass on area lakes; ski touring; scenic Highway 83; Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Location: 15 miles north of junction Highway 83 and 200 in western Montana. Nearest airport is Missoula, 60 miles west via Highway 200 and I-90.

Maps & Information: Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest Box 717, Seeley Lake, MT 59868, (406) 677-2233; Seeley Lake Driftriders, Box 174, Seeley Lake, MT 59868; Seeley Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Box 516, Seeley Lake, MT 59868, (406) 677-2880.

8

SKALKAHO

One of Montana's least traveled snowmobile areas is also one of the most scenic. The Skalkaho Pass area straddles the Sapphire Mountains in the sprawling Bitterroot National Forest in southwestern Montana. This a land of lofty peaks, vast forests and lovely rivers. It has been attracting visitors since 1805, when Lewis & Clark first entered the south end of the Bitterroot Valley. Following their lead were fur traders, missionaries, copper kings and timber

Snow-covered tree at Lee Metcalf N.W.R. / Alan & Sandy Carey photo



barons. Today, the Bitterroot is a mix of small businesses and friendly people. It is dotted with small towns, hidden resorts, hot springs and historic sites. In summer, the Skalkaho Highway from Hamilton to the Georgetown Lake area is a scenic alternative to Interstate 90. In winter, it is the kind of trail that snowmobilers dream about. Closed to automobile traffic, it allows privileged views of frozen Skalkaho Falls, tall peaks and deep canyons.

Trails: Skalkaho Highway offers 20 miles of groomed trails that take snowmobilers to the top of the pass. From there, open areas and ungroomed trails offer a wide variety of terrain for all skill levels. The trail is reached from Hamilton on the Skalkaho Highway.

Season:

Early December through April.

Elevation:

Hamilton, 3,572'; Skalkaho Pass, 7,260'; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder early, with hardpack developing as season progresses.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 18 inches on the level to 7'-8' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Mid-20s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales, service and rentals are available in Hamilton. A wide variety of food and lodging are available in Hamilton and throughout the Bitterroot Valley.

Nearby Attractions: Lost Trail ski area; Selway Bitterroot; Welcome Creek and Anaconda-Pintler wilderness areas; Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge; Marcus Daly Mansion; St. Mary's Mission; ski touring and hot springs resorts.

Location: Trailhead is 15 miles east of Hamilton. Hamilton is 50 miles south of Missoula on US 93 in southwestern Montana. Nearest airport is Missoula.

Maps & Information: Darby Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, Darby, MT 59829, (406) 821-3913.



Clipper Sled / Alan & Sandy Carey photo

GLACIER COUNTRY LODGING

AERO INN, 1830 Hwy 93 South, Kalispell, 59901, 800-843-6114. Located adjacent to the city airport and 15 miles from the Flathead trail system. Features free continental breakfast, sauna, jacuzzi, and handicap facilities. AE MC DC VI DSC \$

ALPINE MOTEL, 1009 Hwy 2 East, Kalispell, 59901, 257-7155. Located 5 minutes from downtown Kalispell and within walking distance from two restaurants. Features kitchenettes and jacuzzi with group rates available. MC VI DSC \$ \$ \$

BAY POINT ESTATES, 300 Bay Point Dr., Whitefish, 59937, 862-2331. Located near the Flathead trail system featuring completely furnished condominiums with indoor pool, fireplaces, DD telephones, cable TV, sauna and jacuzzi. Packages available. MC VI \$ \$

BROAD AXE LODGE, 1237 East Fork Road, Sula, 59871, 821-3878. Located in a beautiful setting surrounded by the Bitterroot National Forest with easy access to many unused roads leading to great sledding on the Continental Divide. Features restaurant, lounge and kitchenettes. MC VI \$ \$

4B's INN, 3803 Brooks, Missoula, 59801, 800-272-9500. Located in Missoula near the Lolo trail system. Features a restaurant, handicap facilities and the best of Missoula at reasonable prices. Ask about low group rates. AE MC DC VI DSC \$

HOLLAND LAKE LODGE, Swan Valley, SR Box 2083-S, Condon, 59826, 800-648-8859. Located at the north end of the Seeley Lake system in the heart of the beautiful Swan Valley. Unlimited miles of sledding available. Features restaurant, cocktail lounge, kitchenettes, sauna and cabin with handicap facilities. MC VI DSC \$ \$ \$

KURTZ'S KOOTENAI VIEW, P.O. Box 93, Troy, 59935, 295-4630. Located near the Libby trail system. Log cabin and 2-bedroom A-frame overlooking Kootenai River. Spa, indoor swimming pool, kitchen. Handicap accommodations available. \$ \$

MOUNTAIN HOLIDAY MOTEL, 6595 Hwy 93 South, Whitefish, 59937, 800-543-8064. Located near the Flathead trail system featuring one kitchenette, swimming pool, guest laundry and meeting/hospitality room. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$ \$

MOUNTAIN SHADOWS MOTEL, P.O. Box 0, Columbia Falls, 59912, 892-7686. Located near the Flathead trail system, featuring a restaurant, beer and wine lounge and kitchenettes. Plenty of parking available. MC VI \$

Swan Range, Flathead River / W. Mumford photo



OL' RIVER BRIDGE INN, 7358 Hwy 2 East, Columbia Falls, 59912, 892-2181. Located near the Flathead trail system featuring a restaurant and cocktail lounge with keno, poker and live music on weekends. Pool and handicap facilities available. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$

PTARMIGAN VILLAGE, 3000 Big Mountain Rd., Whitefish, 59937, 862-3594. Located near the Flathead trail system featuring fully furnished 2 & 3 bedroom condos with fireplace, cable TV, kitchenettes, sauna, jacuzzi, pool, handicap facilities and packages for snowmobilers. MC VI \$\$\$

RESERVE STREET INN, 4825 N. Reserve St., Missoula, 59802, 800-221-2057 (in MT), 800-521-2057 (outside MT). Located near the Lolo trail system featuring restaurant, cocktail lounge, sauna, jacuzzi, handicap facilities and snowmobile packages. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

SUPER 8 MOTEL OF CONRAD, 215 N. Main, Conrad, 59425, 800-843-1991. 80 miles from Marias Pass trails and on the way to King's Hill. Featuring restaurant, kitchenettes, handicap facilities, in-house guest laundry, groceries, sundries and fuel. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$

SUPER 8 MOTEL OF MISSOULA, 3901 S. Brooks, Missoula, 59801, 800-843-1991. Located near the Lolo and Garnet trail systems, featuring outside plug-ins, large truck/trailer parking and handicap facilities. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$

TAMARACKS RESORT, P.O. Box 929, Seeley Lake, 59868, 677-2433. Located in Lolo National Forest at the quiet north end of Seeley Lake. 8 cabins with showers, kitchens and up to 5 beds. Offering snowmobile rentals & packages. Just minutes from groomed Seeley Lake trails. MC VI DSC \$ \$\$ \$\$\$.

THE BEST WESTERN OUTLAW INN, 1701 Hwy 93 South, Kalispell, 59901, 800-247-9707 (in MT), 800-237-7445 (outside MT). Located near the Flathead trail system featuring fine dining, entertainment, lounge, gift shop, jacuzzi, two pools and snowmobile packages. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

TOWNHOUSE INNS OF HAMILTON, 1115 No. First, Hamilton, 59840, 800-442-INNS. Located 23 miles from Skalkaho Pass trails featuring restaurant, sauna, jacuzzi and offering handicap accommodations and in-house guest laundry. Food and fuel next door. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

TRIPLE CREEK MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY, West Fork Stage Route, Darby, 59840, 821-4664. Located at the scenic base of Trapper Peak near the Wisdom trail system. An all-inclusive vacation package with gourmet meals, full lounge, horse-back riding, hot tub and handicap facilities. NO CHILDREN. A quality snowmobiling experience. AE MC VI \$\$\$

VILLAGE RED LION MOTOR INN, 100 Madison St., Missoula, 59802, 728-3100 or 800-547-8010. Near the Lolo trail system, featuring restaurant, cocktail lounge with live music Tuesday through Saturday. Sauna, gift shop and handicap facilities. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$\$

GLACIER COUNTRY SERVICES

MC AFEE LODGE, Route 1, Yaak River Road, Troy, 59935, 295-4880. Located on the Libby trail system. Offering snowmobile rentals, group rates, guided tours and park and ride service. Lodging, dining, hot tub, sauna and exercise room at the Lodge. MC VI

RONAN SPORTS CYCLE, 112 Main S. W., Ronan, 59864, 676-5000. Located near the Mission Mountain trail system. Offering Yamaha parts and service and snowmobile clothing and accessory sales. AE MC VI

UNLIMITED FUN, 1805 Hwy 2 West, Columbia Falls, 59912, 892-7676. Located near the Flathead trail system. Snowmobile rentals: \$77.50 full day; \$57.50 half day. Full-service Yamaha dealer with parts, accessories and service. Guided tours and clothing rentals available. Ask about lodging packages. AE MC VI

COLUMBIA SAW AND SKIDOO, 30 9th St. East, Columbia Falls, 59912, 800-221-5098. Located on the Flathead trail system. Snowmobile rentals: \$75 full day; \$50 half day; group rates negotiable. Clothing rentals, guided tours, park and ride service and lodging/rental packages available. Full repair of all snowmobile makes and models. Retail sales of Skidoo. MC VI DSC

SNO-SLIP RENTALS, 12 Luedtke Rd., Cut Bank, 59427, 873-4780. Located near the Marias Pass trails. Snowmobile rentals: \$70 full day; hourly rates available. Guided tours also available.

SUMMIT STATION, Box 167, East Glacier, 59434, 226-4428. Located on the Marias Pass trail system. Snowmobile rentals: \$70 full day; \$10 hourly. Guided tours and park and ride service. Food and beverages available. MC VI

MIDDLEFORK OUTDOOR RECREATION, P.O. Box 395, Martin City, 59926, 387-5556. Located at a trail head for the Flathead system. Snowmobile rentals: \$69 full day; \$50 half day. Snowmobile maintenance equipment, clothing rentals, guided tours and park and ride service, full lodging, dining and rental packages. MC VI

Room rates are based on double occupancy for the 1989-90 Winter Season and are subject to change.

\$ Under \$40
 \$\$ Between \$40 and \$60
 \$\$\$ Over \$60

Credit Cards:

VI VISA
 MC MASTER CARD
 AE AMERICAN EXPRESS
 DC DINERS CLUB
 CB CARTE BLANCHE
 DSC DISCOVER



A FEW TIPS...

The following tips will enhance your enjoyment of a Montana snowmobile vacation.

HIGH ALTITUDE PERFORMANCE

The higher elevations of the West make demands on an engine that require special tuning. At high elevations, there is less oxygen, so an engine that has been tuned for low elevations will run too rich. Properly jetting the carburetor and adjusting the clutch are the keys to enjoyable riding on Montana's high-mountain trails. A good dealer will supply a specification chart for jetting and clutching a machine he sells. Talk with other snowmobilers in the area to locate a trusted and competent mechanic.

WINTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Trees transformed by snow into ghosts. A herd of elk moving through sunlight on snow. These are once-in-a-lifetime images you will want to capture forever on film. Winter photography can be tricky at best but keep these tips in mind and you should be able to fill your photo album with memories of your Montana vacation.

- ✓ Keep camera, batteries and film warm by storing them close to your body.
- ✓ Pack an extra battery.
- ✓ Advance and rewind film slowly to keep cold, brittle film from breaking.
- ✓ Avoid fogging your lens by brushing snow off, not blowing it off.
- ✓ Meter from the palm of your hand and open up one stop. That way, you're metering according to light conditions and not according to a snowy landscape that can deceive your light meter.
- ✓ For color film, use a polarizer on clear days and a color conversion filter on overcast days.
- ✓ Place camera, lenses and film in airtight plastic bags before entering a warm room to keep condensation away. Remove from the bags when they have warmed up.

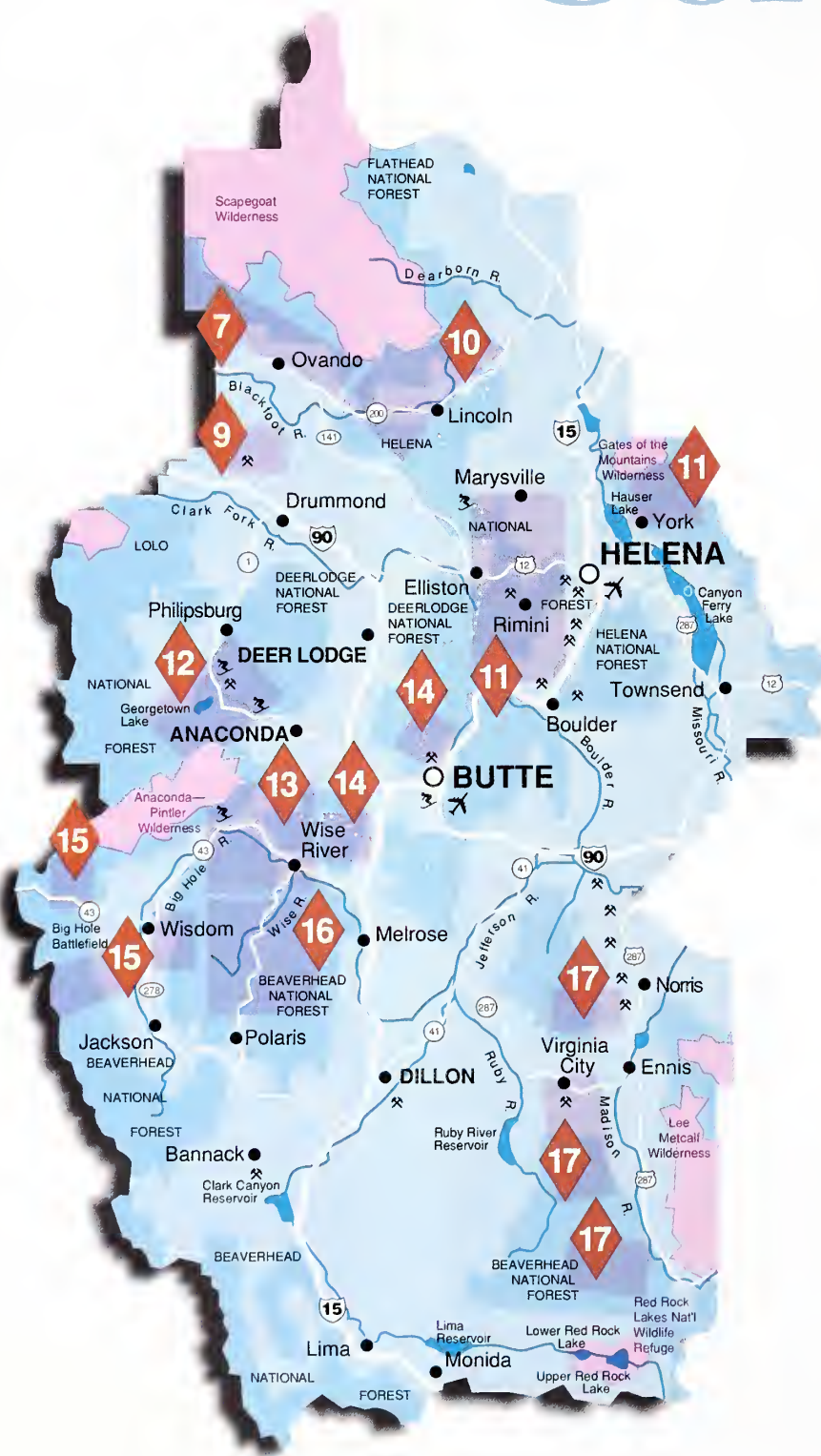
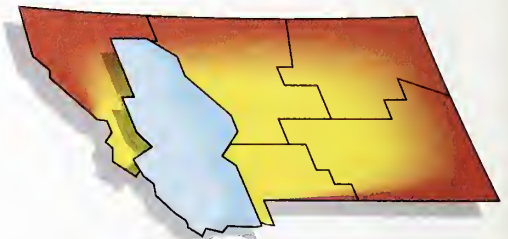


Gold West

COUNTRY



It was gold that lured Montana's earliest fortune seekers to the mountains and rivers of southwestern Montana. Today, Gold West Country draws winter recreationists to its snowy peaks where the riches are reliable and the reward is fun. Visit the most famous gold camp of them all—Virginia City—when its once-bustling boardwalks and saloons are silenced by snowfall. Other treasures that await the winter visitor are hot springs resorts, ghost towns, ice fishing on Georgetown and Canyon Ferry lakes, a living history cattle ranch, antique Ford museum and some of the friendliest ski areas in the West. Visitors to Butte can view the mansions and copper mines where some of Montana's greatest political wars were fought over possession of "the richest hill on earth." In Helena, visitors can trace the capital city's gold-rich history along main street, still called Last Chance Gulch. Some of Gold West Country's best events are winter events, like the national and international speedskating competition in Butte and the Governor's Cup 500-Mile Sled Dog Race starting and ending in Helena.



LEGEND



○ HELENA

● Lincoln

LOLO

Wilderness Areas

Continental Divide

Lakes and Waterways

Cities

Towns

National Forests

Wilderness Areas

Continental Divide

Lakes and Waterways

(15) Interstate Marker

(100) U.S. Numbered Marker

(20) State Route Marker

✈ Major Airports

✖ Ghost Town or Early Mining Camp

⚡ Ski Area

2 Snowmobile Area

9 GARNET

Less than a century ago, a prosperous gold mining town in western Montana's Garnet Range boasted a dozen saloons, numerous hotels, brothels, stores, blacksmith shops and homes for more than a thousand residents. The decline of the gold rush era and a fire in 1911 left the town of Garnet with only a few of its original structures. By 1950 it housed only ghosts. But today, thanks to the Garnet Preservation Association and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, it is active again. A 55-mile trail system has opened the town to snowmobilers and skiers, providing a tangible link to an important era in the development of the Rocky Mountain West. Besides Kelly's Saloon, Davey's Store, the J.K. Wells Hotel and some of the other buildings that have been preserved, visitors enjoy spectacular views of the Blackfoot Valley, the Mission Mountains, the Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Pintler Range. Cabin rentals in town and elsewhere in the Garnet Range make this a unique winter experience.

Trails: The core of this trail system is the 31.5-mile Garnet National Winter Recreation Trail, which takes snowmobilers and skiers into the heart of the ghost town and the surrounding area. Secondary trails, including First Chance Gulch, Top O'Deep and Union Peak, take recreationists to higher elevations and more remote cabins and mines.

Season:

Jan. 1 through April.

Elevation:

4,200' at the trailhead; trails to 7,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow early in the season, turning to hardpack as season progresses. Blowing and drifting on open slopes and ridge tops.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to more than 4' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

10-30 degrees.



Neal & Mary Jane Mishler photo

Services:

There are no commercial services in Garnet. Cabin rentals are available through the Garnet Preservation Association. A visitor center is open on weekends. A full range of services, including snowmobile sales and service, is available in Missoula, 30 miles southwest on Highway 200. Food and lodging are also available in Drummond, off I-90 south of Garnet.

Nearby Attractions: Missoula, home of the University of Montana; Seeley Lake, popular snowmobile area.

Location: The ghost town is about 30 miles west of Missoula and can be reached from either Highway 200 or Interstate 90. Nearest airport is Missoula.

Maps & Information: Garnet Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, 3255 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59801, (406) 329-3914; Garnet Preservation Association, P.O. Box 8531, Missoula, MT 59801, (406) 549-8476 or 329-3914; Missoula Convention & Visitors Bureau, 825 E. Front, Missoula, MT 59801, (406) 543-6623.

10 LINCOLN

Start your weekend with a cup of coffee or hot chocolate at the Ponderosa Snow Warrior's clubhouse and then explore more than 200 miles of groomed trails in the popular winter sports area around Lincoln. Eight major trail systems start right in town, where sledding is permitted on streets and roads. Head north to the edge of the Scapegoat Wilderness or over Huckleberry Pass to another 300 miles of groomed trails in the Seeley Lake area. Easy trails south of Lincoln connect the Blackfoot Valley with the scenic Nevada Creek area. The possibilities are endless in this friendly mountain village surrounded by forests, lakes and the beautiful Blackfoot River. Gateway to some of Montana's most popular backcountry, Lincoln attracts outdoor recreationists all year long. Backpacks, hiking boots and fly rods—the essential gear of summer—give way to snowmobiles, nordic skis and dog sleds in winter.

Trails: Popular trails include scenic Huckleberry Pass, which connects two extensive trail systems in Lincoln and Seeley Lake; Dalton Mountain, an easy trail with lots of play areas south of town; Keep Cool, a scenic lake tour; Alice Creek, a scenic route with play areas. There are a few restricted areas but lots of play areas and plenty of variety for all skill levels. You're likely to share these trails with local populations of elk and deer.

Season:

Dec. 1 through April.



Sled dog races / B. Sallaz photo

Elevation:

Lincoln, 4,575'; trails to 8,200'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow early; hardpack from February. February and March are prime for snowmobiling.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 3' on the level to 6'-12' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Mid 20s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service, lodging and food are all available in Lincoln. Guided tours can be arranged through the Ponderosa Snow Warriors Snowmobile Club.

Events: Lincoln is a check point for the Governor's Cup 500-Mile Sled Dog Race, second week in February.

Nearby Attractions: Seeley Lake snowmobile trail system; ice fishing for rainbow trout on Brown's Lake; Scapegoat and adjoining Bob Marshall wilderness areas.

Location: Lincoln is midway between Great Falls and Missoula on Highway 200. Nearest airports are Great Falls, 90 miles northeast, Missoula, 80 miles west, and Helena, 60 miles southeast on Highway 279.

Maps & Information: Lincoln Ranger District, Helena National Forest, Box 234, Lincoln, MT 59639, (406) 362-4265; Ponderosa Snow Warriors, Box 955, Lincoln, MT 59639, (406) 362-4401.

11 HELENA

If snowmobiling were all Montana's state capital had to offer, winter visitors would return again and again just to explore the mountains and trails within an hour's drive of the city. Extending from Helena in nearly every direction are 225 miles of trails leading to ghost towns, wilderness areas, high mountain ridges and lakes, plus unlimited exploring on thousands of acres of national forest. And where else can you get in on the fun of packing trail with other snowmobilers for the longest sled dog race in the lower 48?

But Helena has so much more. There is downhill and nordic skiing atop the Continental Divide and some of the state's hottest ice fishing at nearby lakes. And there's the city itself, once known as

"Queen of the Rockies." Soak up her rich mining and political history from the copper-domed State Capitol to historic Last Chance Gulch.

Trails: There are three major trail systems, all within a 30-minute drive of Helena. The Marysville area has 45 miles of groomed trails that form three interconnected loops. The old mining towns of Austin and Marysville are fun to explore. Just 10 miles from Helena is the Minnehaha-Rimini area with 120 miles of groomed trails that explore the Little Blackfoot River Valley west to Elliston and south to Basin along the Continental Divide, with several meadows and lakes east of the Divide. Northeast of Helena,



Photo courtesy of Yamaha

there are 60 miles of groomed trails in the Magpie-Sunshine area that include portions of the scenic Figure Eight route, views of the Gates of the Mountains wilderness and a sidetrip to the Hogback Mountain Lookout.

Season:

December through March.

Elevation:

Helena, 4,000'; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Improve as season progresses and snowpack settles.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 5'-6' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

High 20s to low 30s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales, service and rentals, plus a full range of lodging and food services are available in Helena. Guided tours may be arranged through the Helena Snowdrifters Snowmobile Club.

Events: Organized outings with the Helena Snowdrifters every Sunday; overnight trip during New Year's holiday; Governor's Cup 500-Mile Sled Dog Race, 2nd week in February; Charity Ride, March.

Nearby Attractions: Great Divide ski area; MacDonald Pass ski touring area; ice fishing on Canyon Ferry, Hauser & Holter lakes; State Capitol; Montana

Historical Society; Holter Museum of Art; Original Governor's Mansion; St. Helena Cathedral.

Location: Helena is at the junction of Interstate 15, US 12 and US 287, on the east slope of the Rockies in western Montana. Fly into Helena or drive I-15 or US 287 north-south or US 12 east-west.

Information & Maps: Helena Ranger District, Helena National Forest, 2001 Poplar, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 449-5490; Helena Snowdrifters, 3420 Country Club Road, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 442-0873; Helena Chamber of Commerce, 201 East Lyndale, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 442-4120.

12 GEORGETOWN LAKE

One of Montana's most popular lakes is the centerpiece of a winter sports area that offers snowmobiling, ice fishing, downhill and nordic skiing. Located on the Pintler Scenic Route, Georgetown Lake is surrounded by mountains and wilderness. To the west lie the Sapphires, to the north the Flint Creek Range and to the south, the high peaks of the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness. In and around these mountains lies a 90-mile network of groomed snowmobile trails, many more miles of ungroomed trails and a vast play area on and around the lake. There's an abundance of silver salmon in Georgetown Lake and fun at nearby downhill slopes, nordic trails and mineral hot springs swimming pools. This is a friendly, family area where winter sports are a way of life and winter snowfall is cause for celebration. Winter visitors are welcome because there is lots to do and plenty of space for all who love winter.

Trails: Four major trail systems include Carp Ridge, which ends at the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness boundary; Peterson Meadows, a popular spot for cookouts and picnics; Red Lion/Race-track Lake with ridgetop views of surrounding peaks; and Echo Lake, halfway between Georgetown Lake and Discovery Basin ski area. Another popular trail, Storm Lake, leads to the northeast edge of the wilderness.

Season:

Mid-December through April.

Elevation:

Georgetown, 6,400'; trails to 9,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Well packed trails are groomed five days a week.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 7'-8' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

15-20 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service are available in nearby Philipsburg and Anaconda. Fuel, food and lodging are available at Georgetown Lake and in Philipsburg and Anaconda. Guided tours may be arranged through the Anaconda Snowmobile Club.



Ice fishing / Alan & Sandy Carey photo

Events: Active snowmobile and service clubs sponsor a number of poker runs, drag races and cookouts throughout the winter; "Winternational" features six weekends of indoor & outdoor sporting events in the Anaconda-Butte area, February to mid-March; St. Patrick's Day, Anaconda and Butte, March 17.

Nearby Attractions: Discovery Basin ski area; Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness; Copper Village Museum & Art Gallery, Washoe Theater and antique train display, all in Anaconda; U.S. High Altitude Sports Center, Copper King Mansion, Arts Chateau, Mineral Museum, Berkeley Pit and Our Lady of the Rockies, all in Butte.

Location: Pintler Scenic Route (Highway 1 between Drummond and Anaconda, off Interstate 90 in southwestern Montana). Nearest airports are Butte, 50 miles east and Missoula, 80 miles west.

Maps & Information: Philipsburg Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, P.O. Box H, Philipsburg, MT 59858, (406) 859-3211; Anaconda Snowmobile Club, 1919 West Park, Anaconda, MT 59711, (406) 563-8182.

13 WISE RIVER

Located at the north end of the popular Wise River-Polaris National Snowmobile Trail in southwestern Montana, Wise River is a small but significant outpost for year-round outdoor recreation. In June, news of the salmonfly hatch on the lower Big Hole River draws anglers from throughout Montana and the nation. In October, Wise River serves as a base camp for sportsmen who hunt deer and elk in the rugged peaks of the Pioneers and nearby mountain ranges. In December, snow transforms these mountains and river valleys into one giant snowmobile park. Choose one of the many trails within the 100-mile-long Wise River-Polaris trail system, rent a cabin at the end of a groomed snowmobile trail, or ride your sled to nearby Maverick Mountain for an afternoon of downhill skiing. Or choose from several ice-paved alpine lakes where the fishing heats up when the temperature drops. Snowmobiles are the preferred means of transportation in this part of the country and sledding is permitted right in the town of Wise River.

Trails: Several loops, meadows and side trails are accessed from the Wise River-Polaris Trail (see Dillon), including Quartz Hill, with 10 miles of groomed trails and another 10 miles of ungroomed trails that lead to a massive, high plateau; Anderson Meadows, which leads to backcountry lakes and a rental cabin on 20 miles of groomed and ungroomed trails; Pattengail, which follows Pattengail Creek eight miles to Pattengail Falls; Lacy Creek, with 10 miles of groomed and ungroomed trails to five high mountain lakes; and Bryant Creek

B. Sallaz photo



and the Highline Trail to more back-country lakes and another rental cabin. The Wise River trails also connect with the Wisdom trail system to the west (see Wisdom).

Season:

December to mid-April.

Elevation:

Wise River, 5,500'; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Improve as season progresses with best sledding beginning in late January.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 7'-8' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Ranges from 0 to 32 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service in Wise River. Fuel, food and lodging in Wise River and on the Wise River-Polaris Trail. Guided tours may be arranged through the Wise River Jackpine Savages Snowmobile Club.

Events: Poker runs in January, February; hill climbs in March.

Nearby Attractions: Wise River-Polaris National Snowmobile Trail; Maverick Mountain ski area; ski touring and ice fishing.

Location: Highway 43, 12 miles west of Interstate 15 between Butte and Dillon. Nearest airport is Butte.

Maps & Information: Wise River Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, Box 100, Wise River, MT 59762, (406) 832-3178; Wise River Jackpine Savages, Wise River Club, Wise River, MT 59762, (406) 832-3258.

14 BUTTE

Mile-high Butte has a rich winter sports tradition centered in speed skating. Its high altitude, long winter season and clean air create an environment that has produced three Olympic athletes, numerous national champions and an Olympic coach. Serious athletes train and compete at its U.S. High Altitude Sports Center, an important link in the North American speed skating circuit. The location of this historic mining city near the Continental Divide has created an equally outstanding environment for snowmobiling. Within minutes of town are 60 miles of trails in three different mountain ranges. Soak up the views at 8,000 feet, then come back to Butte and soak up the boisterous mining and political history of a city once known as "the richest hill on earth." Butte is the town that never sleeps, a legacy of the era when three shifts of underground miners worked around the clock to produce more than \$2.5 billion worth of copper ore over half a century. The entire city has been designated a national historic landmark.

Come for the history, come for the color and come for the snow.

Trails: Choose from three trail systems in the Deerlodge National Forest: an 18-mile loop in the Fleece Mountains southwest of Butte, with ridge-top views of the Big Hole Valley; a 20-mile loop in the Highland Mountains south of Butte, with spectacular views of the Fleece and Humbug Spires and a 22-mile trail with meadows and play areas in the Lowland Mountains north of Butte. These trails are not groomed regularly but are well marked and heavily traveled.

Season:

Early December to mid-April.

Elevation:

Butte, 5,716'; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow turning to hardpack as season progresses.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 1' on the level to 8'-10' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

0-30 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service, plus a full range of food, lodging and entertainment are available in Butte. Guided snowmobile tours may be arranged through the Hi Country Snow Riders Snowmobile Club.

S. Wong photo



Events: State, regional, national and international speed skating events, November through February; "Winternational," 6 weekends of indoor & outdoor sporting events, February to mid-March; St. Patrick's Day, March 17.

Nearby Attractions: U.S. High Altitude Sports Center (public skating when not in use for special events); Copper King Mansion; Arts Chateau; Mineral Museum at the Montana College of Mineral Science & Technology; Berkeley Pit; Our Lady of the Rockies; Discovery Basin ski area; ice fishing on Georgetown Lake.

Location: Junction of interstate highways 15 and 90 in southwestern Montana. Fly directly to Butte or to nearby Bozeman, Helena or Missoula.

Maps & Information: Butte Ranger District, Deerlodge National Forest, 2201 White Blvd., Butte, MT 59701, (406) 494-2147; Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, 2950 Harrison Ave., Butte, MT 59701, (406) 494-5595.

15 WISDOM

Indians, fur trappers, traders, miners and ranchers. Many have been drawn to the scenic, high mountain valley called the Big Hole Basin but few have stayed. The long winters and cold temperatures that keep people from settling in this pristine valley make it perfect for snowmobiling. Cold, dry powder snow comes early and stays late, assuring great sledding for snowmobilers who embrace winter. If bright lights and big cities are an important part of your winter vacation, Wisdom is probably not for you. But if you seek challenge and solitude and don't mind sharing the trails with moose, elk and other wintering wildlife, Wisdom might be just the place you've been looking for. There are friendly folks in town to keep you company after the sun goes down, plus hot springs resorts, downhill and nordic skiing and a basin full of frontier and Indian lore.

Trails: Join the popular Wise River-Polaris Trail (see Dillon) and Wise River Trails (see Wise River) on the Steel Creek Trails just east of Wisdom. En route, you will reach an elevation of 7,500' and enjoy vistas of the magnificent Big Hole Basin. Or head west toward the Montana-Idaho border on the Gibbonsville Road, which goes into Idaho's Salmon River country and continues all the way to Salmon, Idaho. The Placer Creek Trail crosses the Continental Divide near



Whitetail Buck / Alan & Sandy Carey photo

Lost Trail Pass and drops into the Bitterroot Valley, providing lots of open meadows and rolling terrain along the way.

Season:

December through April.

Elevation:

Wisdom, 6,058'; trails to 7,500'.

Snow Conditions:

Dry powder through most of the season, with snow setting up for faster sledding in March.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 1'-2' on the level to 6' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

In the mid-teens. Wisdom is generally colder than the surrounding mountains.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service in Jackson, 15 miles south. Food and lodging in Wisdom and Jackson.

Events: Poker runs in February.

Nearby Attractions: Polaris-Wise River National Snowmobile Trail; Maverick Mountain and Lost Trail Powder Mountain ski areas; Big Hole National Battlefield; ski touring; hot springs resorts.

Location: Junction of highways 43 and 278, west of Interstate 15, in extreme southwestern Montana. Nearest airport is Butte.

Maps & Information: Wisdom Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, Box 238, Wisdom, MT 59761, (406) 689-3243.

16 DILLON

One of Montana's better kept winter secrets lies in a pristine mountain valley in the southwest corner of the state. The mountains are the Pioneers and the place is Grasshopper Valley. Here, the snow comes early and just keeps piling up to an average mid-season depth of 72 pure, white inches! The Beaverhead SnowRiders start grooming right after hunting season and maintain 106 miles of trails in the Beaverhead National Forest. They mark another 200 miles of ungroomed trails leading to glittering, high mountain meadows and parks. The trail system follows one of the nation's most scenic routes, recently designated a National Forest Scenic Byway. No fancy resorts here—just down-home comfort, good food and Elkhorn's natural hot springs pools to warm your spirits at the end of a winter day. Not much action—just wildlife watching, the annual bikini contest at nearby Maverick Mountain ski area and an occasional dance at the Grasshopper Inn. Not many people either—just enough to keep things on a first-name basis and take care of one of Montana's finest, friendliest trail systems.

Trails: The main trail extends 100 miles along the scenic Wise River-Polaris road that divides the east and west Pioneer Mountains, with several loops that explore parks and meadows, even a once-bustling 1920s mining town. The route is a designated National Snowmobile Trail.

Season:

Thanksgiving to mid-April.

Elevation:

Dillon, 5,100'; trails to 8,400'.

Snow Conditions:

Improve as season progresses; excellent spring season.

Snow Depth:

5'-7'.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Ranges from 0 to 32 degrees.

Services:

Food, fuel and lodging are available on the trail at Elkhorn Hot Springs and the Grasshopper Inn. Snowmobile sales, service and rentals, plus a full range of lodging and food, are available in nearby Dillon.

Events: Torchlight Parade at Maverick Mountain ski area, Dec. 31; Poker Run, mid-January; Annual Bikini Contest at Maverick Mountain, early March.

Nearby Attractions: Unlimited cross country ski trails; Maverick Mountain ski area; Bannack State Park (preserved gold mining town and Montana's first territorial capital); Big Hole National Battlefield.

Location: 27 miles northwest of Dillon, off Route 278, in southwestern Montana. May be reached from the north from Highway 43. Nearest airport is Butte, about 1 hour north on I-15. Daily north-south bus service to Dillon.

Maps & Information: Dillon Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, 610 N. Montana, Dillon, MT 59725, (406) 683-3900; Beaverhead Sno-Riders, P.O. Box 898, Dillon, MT 59875.



VIRGINIA CITY

One of Montana's most popular summer attractions, the restored gold mining camp of Virginia City, is a treasure in the winter. An 1863 gold strike lured thousands of fortune seekers to its main street, Alder Gulch. Within weeks, an estimated 10,000 people were living here and a continuous string of tents and cabins lined the gulch for 14 miles. During the summer, thousands of visitors relive the gold rush era at the Bale of Hay Saloon, the Opera House, the Fair-weather Hotel and many other buildings, shops and museums in Virginia City and nearby Nevada City. In winter, these buildings are shrouded in snow, ghostly reminders of one of the West's most colorful periods. Virginia City's winter pop-

ulation numbers about 100 residents who gladly share their unique community with snowmobilers. Sledding is permitted in town and building tours may be arranged for groups. Within sledding distance of town is a trail system that opens up the Gravelly Range with its magnificent views of the Madison Range, the Ruby Range and the Tobacco Root Mountains.

Trails: The 54-mile Gravelly Range Trail System in the Beaverhead National Forest follows Alder Gulch Canyon, one of the oldest cattle trails in Montana and takes you to old mining claims and the ghost town of Summit City. Side trips include the Bachelor Creek Loop to the top of the Gravelly Range, Clover Meadows and Axolotl Lake. Experienced snowmobilers may sled to seven high mountain lakes with high rock faces in the Meadow Creek area of the Beaverhead National Forest, north of Virginia City in the Tobacco Roots.

Season:

Dec. 1 to mid-April.

Elevation:

Virginia City, 5,822'; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Early season powder hardens in mid-winter for fast sledding.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 1'-2' on the level to 4'-6' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

10-30 degrees.

Services:

Bed and breakfast lodging in Virginia City. Food and lodging are also available in Ennis, 14 miles east on Highway 287. Snowmobile sales and service are available in Bozeman, 65 miles northeast; sales, service and rentals are available in West Yellowstone, 85 miles southeast.

Events: Poker runs, early January and early February; Cabin Fever Winter Festival, mid-February.

Nearby Attractions: Yellowstone National Park, 85 miles southeast; Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, 65 miles northeast.

Location: Highway 287, 50 miles south of I-90 and 85 miles north of Yellowstone National Park, in southwestern Montana.

Maps & Information: Madison Ranger District, Beaverhead National Forest, 5 Forest Service Road, Ennis, MT 59729, (406) 682-4253; Vigilante Snowmobilers, Box 145, Virginia City, MT 59755, (406) 843-5341.

Photo courtesy of Yamaha





Photo courtesy of Yamaha

GOLD WEST COUNTRY LODGING

FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS RESORT, 1500 Fairmont Rd., Anaconda, 59711, 800-332-3272 (in MT), 800-443-2381 (outside MT). Great sledding on five major trail systems within 45 miles of this beautiful year-round resort. Features restaurant, cocktail lounge, kitchenettes, sauna, jacuzzi, indoor and outdoor natural hot springs pools and sled dog rides. Handicap facilities available. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

FISCHER'S FANTASY LODGE, P.O. Box 93, Mooselake/Middlefork of Rock Creek, Philipsburg, 59858. Located near the trailhead of the Pintler Wilderness Area with year-round facilities. Meals cooked for groups or individuals with advance notice or prepare your own meals with full cooking facilities in lodge. Personally catering to groups up to 8 people. MC VI \$

LAST CHANCE MOTEL, P.O. Box 86, Elliston, 59728, 492-7250. Located on the west side of MacDonald Pass near the Helena trail system. From Elliston cross country ski or sled up the Little Blackfoot River. Cafe nearby. MC VI \$

LEEPER'S MOTEL, P.O. Box 634, Lincoln, 59639, 362-4333. On two acres of Ponderosa Pine. Sled right from the door to the exciting Lincoln trails. Features kitchenettes, phone in every room, hot tub and offering handicap facilities, complete packages and tours with advance notice. AE MC VI DSC \$

MORIAH MOTEL, 220 S. Main, Sheridan, 59749, 842-5491. Located just 30 miles from the Virginia City trail system and near other trails in southwest Montana. Offering handicap accommodations. Restaurant nearby. MC VI \$

RUSH'S LAKEVIEW GUEST RANCH, Lima, 59739 (June-Dec.), 2905 Harrison, Butte, 59701 (Dec.-May), 494-2585. Located near great sledding at West Yellowstone and Virginia City. Featuring private ski hill and ski chalet, dance and rec. room, indoor pool, jacuzzi, sauna and dormitory style lodging for up to 50 people. Offering all-inclusive snowmobiling packages. Personal checks welcomed. \$

SPORTSMAN MOTEL, Box 7, Lincoln, 59639, 362-4481. Sled right from the door to the groomed trails of the Lincoln system. Features fireplace with wood supplied in each unit and offering accommodations for the handicapped. MC VI \$

STONEHOUSE INN, 306 E. Idaho, Virginia City, 59755, 843-5504. Located in historic Virginia City, this rustic inn built in 1884 is decorated with antiques & brass beds. Dinners are prepared at the Inn. Snowmobile right from the back door. AE MC VI \$\$

SUNDANCE LODGE MONTANA, Wise River, 59762, 689-3611. Located near the Wise River, Wisdom and Dillon trail systems and surrounded by the Beaverhead National Forest. Dining room, lounge, spa and ski rentals. MC VI \$\$

THREE BEARS MOTEL, P.O. Box 789, Lincoln, 59639, 362-4355. Sled right from your motel door to over 250 miles of great snowmobile terrain. Kitchenettes available. MC VI DSC \$

TOWNHOUSE INNS OF DILLON, 450 No. Interchange, Dillon, 59725, 800-442-4667. Located near great sledding on the Dillon trail system. Features a heated pool and in-house guest laundry. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$

TOWNHOUSE INNS OF BUTTE, 2777 Harrison Ave., Butte, 59701, 800-442-INNS. Located near the Butte trail system. Features hot tub, sauna and offers handicap facilities. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

GOLD WEST COUNTRY SERVICES

GRANITE SPORTLAND, 728 West Broadway, Philipsburg, 59858, 859-3753. Located near the Georgetown Lake trail system. Serving the snowmobiler since 1967 with Yamaha sales and service. Some rentals available. MC VI

Room rates are based on double occupancy for the 1989-90 Winter Season and are subject to change.

\$ Under \$40
 \$\$ Between \$40 and \$60
 \$\$\$ Over \$60

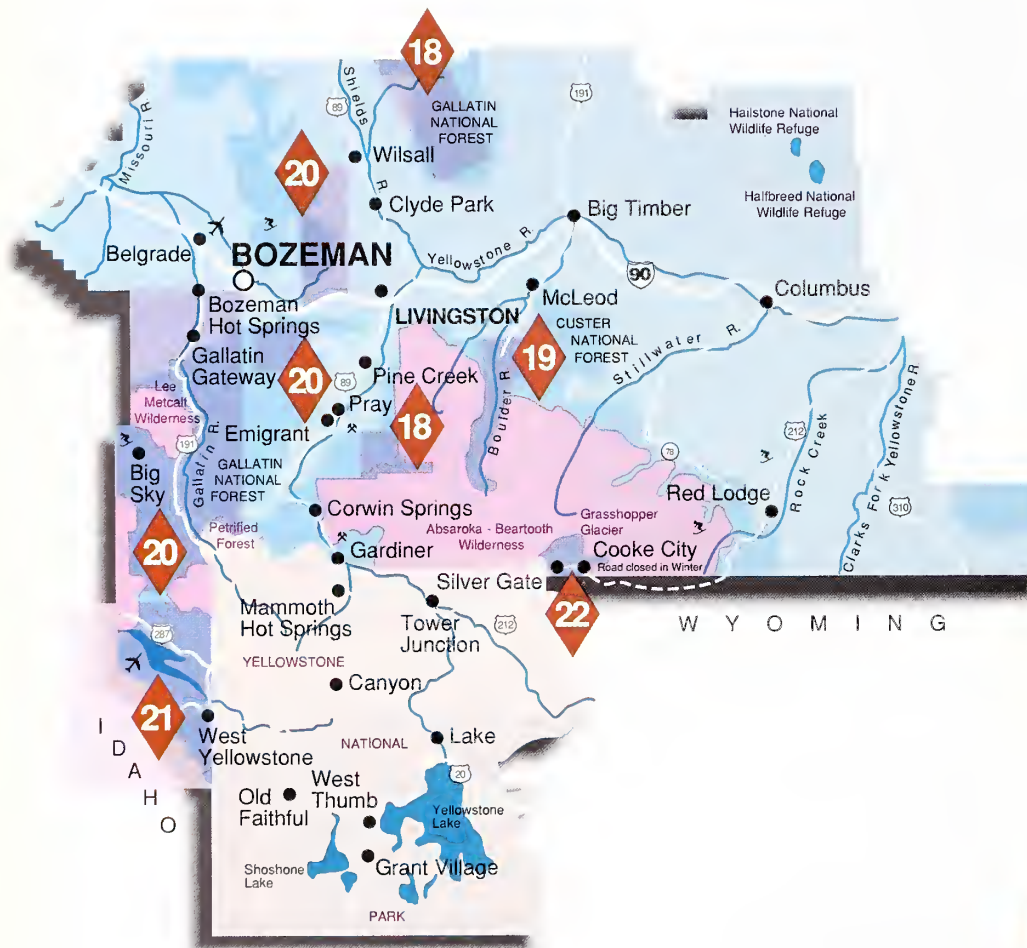
Credit Cards:

VI VISA
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 AE AMERICAN EXPRESS
 DC DINERS CLUB
 CB CARTE BLANCHE
 DSC DISCOVER

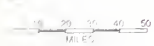


Yellowstone

COUNTRY



LEGEND



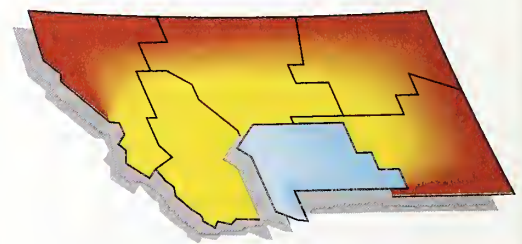
HELENA

- Lincoln Cities
- Towns
- LOLO National Forests
- Scapergat Wilderness Areas
- Continental Divide
- Lakes and Waterways
- PARK National Parks

- 15 Interstate Marker
- 100 U.S. Numbered Marker
- 200 State Route Marker
- ✈ Major Airports
- ✖ Ghost Town or Early Mining Camp
- 3 Ski Area
- 2 Snowmobile Area

One of the world's favorite national parks is now silent. Recently crowded with summer tourists, its highways have been erased by snow. Elk and bison graze near Old Faithful and its thousands of other geysers and hotpots. Swans and geese cruise its steamy waterways. Winter has transformed Yellowstone National Park into a dazzling white playground. With 600 miles of connecting, groomed trails and 10 million acres of national forest lands for off-trail exploring, the Yellowstone Park-West Yellowstone area is one of the nation's most popular snowmobile destinations. With its downhill and nordic ski resorts, Yellowstone Country is a great destination for all who love winter.

Snow comes early to its legendary peaks and ranges—the Bridgers and Beartooths, Lone Mountain and the Spanish Peaks—making it a favorite training ground for Olympic athletes. And it stays late, drawing T-shirt-and-shorts-clad skiers and snowboarders to Big Sky, Bridger Bowl and Red Lodge Mountain to get a jump on their summer tans. There are fun western towns, like Red Lodge, Cooke City, Big Timber and



Livingston and the lively university town of Bozeman, bursting with pride over its newly expanded Museum of the Rockies and digital planetarium. Where better to contemplate the stars than on top of the Rockies?

18 LIVINGSTON

Two of Montana's most spectacular mountain ranges—the Absarokas and the Crazies—provide a majestic setting for the Yellowstone River community of Livingston. In summer and fall, they draw a devoted fellowship of anglers, hikers and hunters who worship their peaks and river valleys. Winter recreationists are equally drawn to their forested canyons and top-of-the-world views. North of Livingston are the Crazies—an island of rugged peaks with commanding views of the Rockies to the west and the plains to the east. South of Livingston are the Absarokas, which form the western wall of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and the northern border of Yellowstone National Park. In



Rare Trumpeter Swans / Alan & Sandy Carey photo

between is the mighty, free-flowing Yellowstone River and the lively western town of Livingston, made up of equal parts of cowboys and fly fishermen. Located at the junction of I-90 and US 89, Livingston is an easy drive from Bozeman or Billings and just one hour north of Yellowstone National Park.

Trails: More than 70 miles of groomed snowmobile trails in the Gallatin and Lewis & Clark national forests are within easy reach. In the Crazy Mountains to the north, choose from the 20-mile Shields Loop, the 15-mile Cottonwood/Trespas Trail or the Ibex Cabin Trail, which leads to a Forest Service cabin that can be rented for extended exploration of nearby play areas and side trails. In the Absarokas to the south is the Mill Creek area, a popular family spot with 20 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, several marked ski trails and a great sledding hill for kids.

Season:

Mid-December to April.

Elevation:

Livingston, 4,489'; trails to 7,500'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow early in the season, turning to hardpack; best sledding is mid-January to early March.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 5' on the level to 10' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Mid-20s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service, plus a full range of food and lodging, are available in Livingston. Rentals are available in Gardiner and at Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park, about an hour south of Livingston on US 89. Guided tours may be arranged through the Big Sky Snowriders Snowmobile Club.

Nearby Attractions: Depot Center Museum, Livingston; Bridger Bowl ski area and Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman; Yellowstone National Park.

Location: Junction of I-90 and US 89 in southwestern Montana. Nearest airport is Bozeman, about 30 minutes west on I-90.

Maps & Information: Livingston Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Route 62, Box 3197, Livingston, MT 59047, (406) 222-1892; Big Sky Snowriders, Rt. 62, Box 3053, Livingston, MT 59047; Livingston Chamber of Commerce, 1104 West Park, Livingston, MT 59047, (406) 222-0850.

Wildlife Watching, Yellowstone / K. Takata photo



19 BIG TIMBER

Glide along a river, through a canyon and right up to the edge of the magnificent Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness on 25 miles of groomed trail south of Big Timber in the scenic Boulder River Valley. A favorite of anglers and hikers in the summer, this valley is best enjoyed by snowmobilers when it fills up with snow. Surrounded on three sides by designated wilderness, the Boulder Canyon Trail follows a beautiful roaded corridor that divides the towering peaks of the Absaroka and Beartooth ranges. If you prefer your views from a distance, try the popular East Boulder-Dry Fork Trail to the north. Enjoy the best of both worlds in the friendly, western town of Big Timber, on I-90, where the snow-clad Crazies dominate the view to the west and the plains begin their relentless march eastward through the Yellowstone River Valley. This is a land of cowboys and cattle ranches, classic dude ranches and some of the best year-round recreation in Montana.

Trails: Two trails provide plenty of variety in the Gallatin National Forest south of Big Timber. The 25-mile Boulder Canyon Trail takes snowmobilers to bowls and meadows, the abandoned mining town of Independence and the edge of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. The upper 7 miles are moderate to difficult. Shorter and easier is the East Boulder-Dry Fork Trail with extensive play areas along its 7-mile length.

Season:

Mid-December to mid-April.

Elevation:

Big Timber, 4,072'; trails to 9,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow early in the season; hard-pack from early February until the end of the season.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 8' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

High 20s to low 30s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service, food and lodging are available in Big Timber.

Nearby Attractions: Yellowstone National Park, 90 miles southwest via Livingston; Bridger Bowl ski area, 60 miles west on I-90; Billings, Montana's largest city, 80 miles east on I-90.

Location: I-90 between Bozeman and Billings in southcentral Montana. Nearest airport is Bozeman, 60 miles west.

Maps & Information: Big Timber Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box A, Big Timber, MT 59011, (406) 932-5155; Sweet Grass County Recreation Association, Big Timber, MT 59011, (406) 932-5319.

20 BOZEMAN

Gateway to Yellowstone National Park, unlimited snowmobiling and some of Montana's finest downhill and nordic skiing, Bozeman is one of the nation's top winter sports areas. The Park lies just 90 miles south through the scenic Gallatin River Canyon. It's an easy drive on US 191. But why drive when you can sled most of the way on the popular Big Sky Snowmobile Trail? Midway is Big Sky Ski Resort, with its many fine shops and restaurants and Lone Mountain Ranch, a world-class nordic resort, plus mile after mile of breathtaking alpine scenery. There's more of that north of Bozeman on a series of connecting trails that combine mountain vistas and alpine lakes with lots of big powder play areas. Bridger Bowl ski area, home of the "cold smoke," and Bohart Ranch ski touring area share the neighborhood.

In between is the energetic, university town of Bozeman. Whether it's the annual Christmas Stroll or Winter Fair, the Museum of the Rockies and the new digital planetarium, college basketball, great restaurants or one-of-a-kind shops, Bozeman will call you back again and again.



Bison in Yellowstone / Mishler photo

Trails: There are 200 miles of groomed trails in the Bozeman area, plus many additional miles of ungroomed but well marked trails. Included in the system is the popular 120-mile Big Sky Snowmobile Trail. Portions are challenging but five access routes make shorter loops for easier rides. Buck Creek Ridge, off US 191 south of Big Sky, provides miles of excellent play area. North of town in the Bridger Range are the Brackett/Fairy Lake and Olsen Creek/Bangtail Ridge trails, providing 20 miles of groomed trails and many more ungroomed miles, big play areas and spectacular alpine scenery.

Season:

Late November through April.

Elevation:

Bozeman, 4,755'; trails to 9,500'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder snow lasts through February; hardpack until the end of the season.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 12'-15' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

Range from 5-20 degrees in January to 20-40 degrees in March-April.

Services:

A full range of services is available in Bozeman and the Gallatin Canyon. Lodging and food range from modest to elegant. All makes of snowmobiles are sold and serviced. Rentals are available in the Gallatin Canyon at Big Sky. Guided tours can be arranged through rental operators or the Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association.

Events: Christmas Stroll, Bozeman, early December; Winter Fair, Bozeman, late January; Big Sky Cross Country Race (Bozeman to West Yellowstone on the Big Sky Snowmobile Trail), late February or early March; ice drag races, mid-January and early March; regular outings with the Gallatin Valley

Snowmobile Association include poker rides, rallies and social events.

Nearby Attractions: Bridger Bowl ski area; Big Sky Ski Resort; Museum of the Rockies; Yellowstone National Park.

Location: Southwestern Montana on I-90 between Billings and Butte. Fly into Bozeman. Drive I-90 east-west or US 191/287 north-south. Daily bus service between Bozeman and West Yellowstone.

Maps & Information: Bozeman Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, 601 Nikles, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 587-6920; Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association, Box 755, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 586-6820; Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce, Box B, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 586-5421.

21 WEST YELLOWSTONE

Next door to Yellowstone National Park, headquarters for the nation's most extensive trail system, West Yellowstone is at the top of every snowmobiler's dream list of places to go. It calls itself the "Snowmobile Capital of the World," and that's a slogan you can trust. The trail system begins right in town, where snowmobilers share city streets with



Photo courtesy Yellowstone Tour & Travel

motorists. From town, choose from 200 miles of groomed trails inside the Park or another 400 miles outside. There are guided snowcoach and ski tours of Yellowstone, unlimited backcountry exploring for snowmobilers and skiers in the surrounding Gallatin and Targhee national forests, a world-class nordic trail system right in town and downhill skiing and snowboarding at nearby Big Sky Resort. With so much to do, West

Yellowstone keeps winter visitors coming back year after year. Once is never enough. Its dozens of lodging facilities and restaurants, nightlife and festivals, tour guides, dealers and rental operators make West Yellowstone a perfect destination for snowmobilers, skiers and sightseers.

Trails: All Yellowstone National Park roads except the one from Mammoth to Cooke City in the north end of the Park are open to snowmobiles. Ride from West Yellowstone along the Madison River to the **Grand Loop**, which takes you to Old Faithful, Yellowstone Lake, Norris Geyser Basin and many other of the Park's favorite attractions. Popular national forest trails are the **Two Top National Recreation Snowmobile Trail**, providing panoramic views of three states and the magnificent **Grand Tetons**, **Lionhead** and **South Plateau**.

Season:

Thanksgiving to April.

Elevation:

West Yellowstone, 6,644'; trails to 10,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Powder early; hardpack from early February until the end of the season.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 5' on the level to 12'-14' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

15-25 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales, service and rentals, plus a full range of lodging and food services are readily available in West Yellowstone. Guided tours and packages are also available. Inside the Park, lodging, food and fuel are available at the Old Faithful Snow Lodge and Mammoth Hot Springs. Light snacks and warming huts are located throughout the Park.

Events: U.S. Nordic Ski Team's Cross Country Fall Camp, November; Christmas Festival, 2nd weekend in December; Yellowstone National Park opens for winter season, mid-December (west entrance closes 3rd Sunday in March); Winter Festival, with weeklong snowmobile events, early March; Yellowstone Rendezvous-Great American Ski Chase, March.

Nearby Attractions: Yellowstone National Park; Rendezvous ski trails; Big Sky Ski Resort.



Photo courtesy of Yamaha

Location: West entrance to Yellowstone National Park at junction of US 191/287 and US 20. Nearest airport is Bozeman, 90 miles north on US 191. Daily bus service from Bozeman and Idaho Falls.

Maps & Information: West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 458, West Yellowstone, MT 59758, (406) 646-7701; Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 520, West Yellowstone, MT 59758, (406) 646-7369; Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, (307) 344-7381.



22 COOKE CITY

The alpine village of Cooke City describes itself as a friendly community of "80 people, dogs, moose and an occasional bison." Gateway to Yellowstone National Park and the spectacular Bear-tooth high country, Cooke City enjoys perhaps the longest winter sports season in Montana. Snowmobilers and skiers start arriving around Thanksgiving and spring snow conditions can last into June. The makers of both Yamaha and Arctic Cat snowmobiles have chosen the area as a test site and film location for their machines.

Sixty miles of groomed trails in the Gallatin National Forest start at the edge of town and take snowmobilers and skiers to the top of the Rockies and the edge of the magnificent Absaroka-Bear-tooth Wilderness. Along the way are rolling hills, switchbacks, open meadows and heavenly peaks. If that's not enough, trailer your machine 51 miles to Yellow-

stone National Park's north entrance at Mammoth and explore the Park's 400-mile trail system. Most snowmobilers are happy to stay in Cooke City, where they are permitted to run their machines in town and merchants, dealers and townspeople go out of their way to meet their needs.

Trails: Popular connecting trails are Daisy Pass, Fisher Creek, Round Lake and Henderson Mountain. Besides spectacular alpine scenery, there are abandoned mining camps, ice fishing lakes and open play areas. Portions of some of these trails are ungroomed and some pass through known avalanche areas. An easier, 3-mile trail follows US 212 west from Cooke City to Silver Gate at Yellowstone's northeast entrance. The Cooke City trail system connects with 50 miles of groomed trails in Wyoming.

Season:

Thanksgiving to mid-May.

Elevation:

Cooke City, 7,600'; trails to 10,000'.

Snow Conditions:

Deep powder snow until March when snowpack starts settling.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 5' in Cooke City to 10'-14' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

18-25 degrees.

Services:

Snowmobile sales, service and rentals, lodging and food are available in Cooke City. Shuttle service between Cooke City and Mammoth is available for snow-

mobilers. Guided tours may be arranged through the Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club.

Events: Rocky Mountain Cross Country Racing Circuit Finale, mid-March.

Nearby Attractions: Yellowstone National Park; Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.

Location: Extreme southcentral Montana on US 212. Nearest airport is Bozeman, 140 miles northwest on I-90, US 89 and Mammoth-Cooke City highway. Car access is through northern Yellowstone National Park. US 212, east of Cooke City, is closed in winter.

Maps & Information: Gardiner Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, Box 5, Gardiner, MT 59030, (406) 848-7375; Yellowstone National Park, WY, 82190, (307) 344-7381; Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club, Box 1145, Cooke City, MT 59020.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY LODGING

ALL SEASON'S INN, Box 1130, Cooke City, 59020, 838-2251. Located in Cooke City. Features everything needed for a great snowmobile vacation including restaurant, cocktail lounge, pool, hot tub, snowmobile rentals, sales, service and fuel. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

ALPINE MOTEL, Box 1030, Cooke City, 59020, 838-2262. In the heart of the "Snowmobile Paradise" with 14 rooms and reasonable rates. MC VI DSC \$

AMBASSADOR QUALITY INN, 315 Yellowstone Ave., West Yellowstone, 59758, 646-7365, 800-221-1151. Just 3½ blocks from the entrance of Yellowstone National Park and great snowmobiling. Features kitchenettes, whirlpool and complete snowmobile packages. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

BEST WESTERN BUCK'S T-4 LODGE, US Hwy 191, P.O. Box 279, Big Sky, 59716, 995-4111, 800-822-4484. Near the entrance to Big Sky Ski Resort with easy access to the Big Sky Snowmobile Trail. Featuring two restaurants, lounge, outdoor jacuzzis. Snowmobile packages available. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

BEST WESTERN EXECUTIVE INN, 236 Dunraven, West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-528-1234. Features restaurant, cocktail lounge, kitchenettes, hot tub, cable TV. Will reserve snowmobiles upon request. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

BEST WESTERN WESTON INN, 103 Gibbon, West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-528-1234. Located just 2 blocks from Yellowstone National Park. Featuring 32 large, comfortable rooms with outside entrances, free continental breakfast and hot tub. Packages and group rates available. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

BIG SKY SKI & SUMMER RESORT, Huntley Lodge, One Lone Mountain Trail, Big Sky, 59716, 800-824-7767 (in MT), 800-548-4486 (outside MT). Montana's largest destination ski resort located near the Big Sky Snowmobile Trail. Deluxe accommodations available with several restaurants and lounges, kitchenettes, and full spa facilities. AE MC DC VI \$\$\$

BIG WESTERN PINE MOTEL, 234 Firehole Ave., West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-221-1151. Features restaurant and cocktail lounge, kitchenettes, hot tub and handicap facilities. Authorized service and warranty dealer for Arctic Cat and Yamaha with a rental fleet of over 100 snowmobiles. Packages available. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$\$

BOZEMAN HOLIDAY INN, 5 Baxter Lane, Bozeman, 59715, 587-4561. Near several trails in the Bozeman area featuring restaurant, cocktail lounge, indoor pool, jacuzzi, recreation area and handicap facilities. AE MC DC VI DSC \$\$

BRANDIN' IRON MOTEL & RV PARK, 201 Canyon St., West Yellowstone, 59758, 646-9411, 800-231-5991 (outside MT). Featuring cocktail lounge, indoor hot tubs, individual refrigerators in each unit, electric plug-ins and ample parking for snowmobile trailers. AE MC DC VI DSC \$

GOLDEN EAGLE LODGE/CONDO RENTALS, P.O. Box 8, Big Sky, 59716, 995-4800, 800-548-4488 (outside MT). Located in Meadow Village at Big Sky Resort featuring over 150 condominiums, restaurant, cocktail lounge, kitchenettes, spa facilities and packages. AE MC VI \$\$

GRANTREE INN, 1325 N. 7th Ave., Bozeman, 59715, 800-624-5865. Located near several trails in the Bozeman area featuring restaurant, cocktail lounge, casino, sauna, handicap facilities, special rates to snowmobilers and spacious trailer parking. AE MC DC VI DSC \$\$

HIGH COUNTRY MOTEL, P.O. Box 1146, Cooke City, 59020, 838-2272. Sled right from your door. Kitchenettes available. Restaurant, rentals and service nearby. AE MC VI DSC \$

LIONSHEAD RESORT SUPER 8 LODGE, 1547 Targhee Pass Hwy, West Yellowstone, 59758, 646-9584. Located at the base of Lionshead & Two Top Mountain. Features a lobby with fireplace, restaurant, cocktail lounge, hot tub, sauna, handicap facilities and full snowmobile packages. AE MC DC VI DSC \$\$

PINE SHADOWS MOTEL, 530 Gibbon Ave., West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-624-5291. Featuring kitchenettes, hot tub, handicap facilities, snowmobile rentals and packages, ample parking for trailers and garage for repairing your own sleds. AE MC VI \$

RAINBOW RANCH LODGE, Gallatin Gateway, 59730, 995-4132. Ride directly from the lodge to groomed trails. Features restaurant, cocktail lounge, game room, hot tub, snowmobile rentals and packages. MC VI \$\$

STAGE COACH INN, 209 Madison Ave., West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-842-2882. Featuring restaurant, lounge with live entertainment, gambling and poker room, sauna, jacuzzi and handicap facilities. All-inclusive snowmobile packages available. AE MC DC VI DSC \$\$

SUPER 8 MOTEL OF COLUMBUS, 602 8th Ave. North, Columbus, 59019, 800-843-1991. Located near the Big Timber trails. Featuring suites, kitchenettes, guest laundry and handicap facilities. Ample parking, 24-hour restaurant and fuel adjacent. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$

THE HAWLEY MOUNTAIN GUEST RANCH, Box 4, McLeod, 59052, 932-5791. Located near the Big Timber trail system. Offers an all-inclusive Montana-style package for a great snowmobile vacation. Write or call for more information. \$\$

THE RANCH MOTEL, 235 Canyon St., West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-234-4083. Just 2 blocks from all trail heads. Featuring restaurant, cocktail lounge, hot tub and snowmobile rentals and packages. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

Two Top, Montana-Idaho border / Mishler photo



320 RANCH INC., 205 Buffalo Horn Creek, Gallatin Gateway, 59730, 995-4283. Located midway on the Big Sky Snowmobile Trail between Bozeman and West Yellowstone. Specializing in back country guide service featuring cabins with cooking units and handicap facilities. MC VI \$\$

TW RECREATIONAL SERVICES, INC., Yellowstone National Park, WY, 82190. Concessionaire inside Yellowstone National Park, offering snowmobile rentals, cross country ski rentals and tours. Lodging available at Old Faithful Snow Lodge and Mammoth Hot Springs. Restaurant, lounge and full snowmobile vacation packages available. AE MC DC VI DSC \$\$

WEARY REST MOTEL, 601 Hwy 20, West Yellowstone, 59758, 646-7633. Completely modern varnished log buildings with knotty pine interiors. Some cabins available with fireplaces and kitchenettes. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$

WESTERN HERITAGE INN, 1200 East Main, Bozeman, 59715, 800-341-8000. Near several trails systems in the Bozeman area, featuring whirlpool suites, jacuzzi and sauna room, guest laundry, HBO and cable TV, handicap facilities and group rates. AE MC DC VI CB DSC \$\$

YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY SERVICES

BEST WESTERN BY MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, Box 646, Gardiner, 59030, 848-7311. At the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park, serving Cooke City and Livingston. Snowmobile rentals: \$50-70 full day; \$45-75 half day; group rates. Holiday and weekend packages available. AE MC DC VI CB DSC

BOZEMAN POLARIS, 403 North 7th, Bozeman, 59715, 587-4671, 800-327-4825 (inside MT). Located near the Bozeman and Big Sky trails systems and other trails in the Livingston and Big Timber area. Snowmobile rentals: \$70 full day; \$45 half day. Authorized dealer for sales, service and parts. AE MC VI

CANYON SNOWMOBILE RENTALS AT BIG SKY, 4730 Gallatin Road, Big Sky, 59730, 995-4400. Located on the Big Sky Snowmobile Trail. Rentals: \$65 full day; \$45 half day; group rates available. Clothing rentals, guided tours, park and ride service. Overnight trips, food and lodging packages available. MC VI DSC

COOKE CITY EXXON AND POLARIS, P.O. Box 1128, Cooke City, 59020, 838-2244. Snowmobile rentals: \$70-80 full day. Clothing rentals, park and ride service, 24 hour tow service (AAA) and extra high-test gasoline available. Polaris sales, service and parts. AE MC VI DSC

HIGH COUNTRY SNOWMOBILE RENTALS, 530 Gibbon Ave., West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-624-5291. Clothing rentals, guided tours and snowmobile vacation packages available with January discounts. AE MC VI



Lone Mountain Ranch

TRAVELER'S SNOWMOBILE RENTALS, Box C, West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-548-9551 or 800-831-5741. Snowmobile rentals: \$50-95 full day; \$40 and up half day; group rates. Clothing rentals, guided tours, cargo sleds, cross country skis and complete lodging, dining and rental packages available. AE MC DC VI DSC

WEST YELLOWSTONE SNOWMOBILE RENTALS, INC., P.O. Box 367, West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-255-3417. Rentals: \$60-95 full day; half-day rentals and group rates available. Clothing rentals, guided tours and complete Arctic Cat parts and service. AE MC VI DSC

YELLOWSTONE ADVENTURES, 215 Canyon St., West Yellowstone, 59758, 646-7735, 800-231-5991 (outside MT). Snowmobile rentals available. No advance reservations needed for half day. Clothing rentals, park and ride service, cargo sleds and complete lodging and rental packages. Full service Skidoo dealer with sales, service and accessories. AE MC VI DSC

YELLOWSTONE ARCTIC-YAMAHA, 208 Electric St., West Yellowstone, 59758, 800-221-1151. Snowmobile rentals: \$66-87 full day, \$45 half day (no reservations needed); group rates. Clothing rentals and guided tours available. Packages include lodging, meals, rentals, park and national forest fees. Full service Yamaha and Arctic Cat dealer with sales, service, parts and accessories. AE MC DC VI CB DSC

Room rates are based on double occupancy for the 1989-90 Winter Season and are subject to change.

\$ Under \$40
 \$\$ Between \$40 and \$60
 \$\$\$ Over \$60

Credit Cards:

VI VISA
 MC MASTER CARD
 AE AMERICAN EXPRESS
 DC DINERS CLUB
 CB CARTE BLANCHE
 DSC DISCOVER

A FEW TIPS...

MAPS

A good map is essential when you're traveling in a new area. Besides, it's fun to chart your progress with a map and discover landmarks you might otherwise miss. Trail maps of many of the areas featured in this guide can be obtained from the ranger district, snowmobile club or chamber of commerce listed at the end of each area. National Forest recreation visitor maps are available for a fee at Forest Service ranger stations and regional offices. Topographic maps and other specialized maps are often available at sporting goods stores in the area you are visiting. Topographic maps can also be ordered from the Publications Office, Montana Bureau of Mines & Geology, Main Hall, Montana Tech, Butte, MT 59701, (406) 496-4167.

FOREST SERVICE CABIN RENTALS

For those who seek the solitude of a true backcountry experience, the Forest Service has a few rustic cabins and lookouts for rent on a first-come, first-served basis. Cabins are furnished with the bare basics (table, chairs, wood stove and bunks). Bedding is not furnished. Cooking utensils, electricity and piped-in water are generally not available. Expect to use outdoor privies. Forest Service personnel at the ranger district in which the cabin is located will be able to tell you what you need to bring.

For a "Recreational Cabin & Lookout Directory" write or call: **Northern Region Headquarters, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807, (406) 329-3511.**



Charlie Russell

COUNTRY



Winter's low sun washes subtle shades of purple and pink across a canvas of sky before it sets over Russell Country. This is the land that inspired Montana artist Charlie Russell and you'll see it in the sunsets and skylines, mountains and buttes, cowboys and cattle spreads of northcentral Montana. After exploring the trails, meadows and parks in the popular King's Hill winter sports area, plan to spend some time in Great Falls where Russell's studio and many of his original works are preserved at the C.M. Russell Complex. Better yet, schedule your winter visit for mid-March to coincide with Great Falls' fabulous C.M. Russell Auction of original western art. For three days, Great Falls is western art headquarters as collectors and admirers from throughout the nation gather to celebrate the artist's birthday with auctions and sales of juried works by top artists. The snow just gets better as the season progresses. For a complete winter vacation, try the skiing at Showdown and Rocky Mountain Hi, nordic skiing from the Little Belts to the Rocky Mountain Front, ice fishing on a dozen lakes and reservoirs and stream fishing on the upper Missouri River.



peaks of Yellowstone National Park. Joining King's Hill from the east is the Little Belt Trail, which starts south of Utica, near cowboy artist Charlie Russell's first Montana home. The trail follows the South Fork of the Judith River into South Fork Canyon and then to large play and hill climbing areas on Russian Flats and Musselshell Hill.

Season:

Dec. 1 through April.

Elevation:

7,000' at parking lot; trails to 8,000'.

Snow Conditions:

This area is famous for powder snow that lasts well into spring.

Snow Depth:

Ranges from 2' on the level to 5'-6' in the mountains.

Average Daytime Temperature:

High teens to low 20s.

Services:

Snowmobile sales and service are available in Great Falls and Lewistown. There are no snowmobile rentals in the area. A full range of visitor services and entertainment is available in Great Falls. Fuel, food and lodging are also available in Lewistown and closer to King's Hill, White Sulphur Springs and Neihart. Lunches are available at Showdown, which is accessible by snowmobile. Guided tours may be arranged through the Great Falls Snowmobilers, Inc. and the Little Belt Snowmobile Club. A parking area, large enough to accommodate RVs is located on US 89, with overflow parking in the area, as well.

Events: New Year's Day Cookout, King's Hill, Jan. 1; PRCA Rodeo Finals, Great Falls, mid-January; Lewistown Beach Party, a full weekend of social and sporting events, late January; Poker runs, January and February; C.M. Russell Auction of original western art, Great Falls, mid-March.

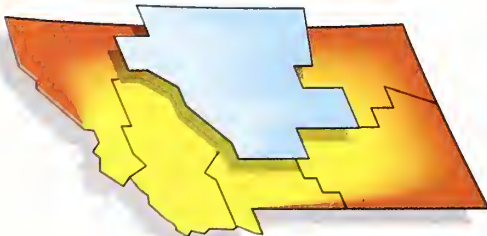
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KING'S HILL/ LITTLE BELTS

With plenty of space, tons of powder and miles of separate trails for everyone, King's Hill is one of Montana's most

popular winter sports areas. Showdown ski area, Silver Crest cross country ski area and the trailhead to more than 200 miles of groomed snowmobile trails are all within a mile of one another in the Little Belt Mountains south of Great Falls. Snowmobilers enjoy several connecting loop trails, parks, meadows and open areas in the King's Hill area, on both sides of US 89. There are some accommodations, restaurants and bars that cater to snowmobilers in the Little Belts. Just one hour north is Great Falls, Montana's second-largest city, with plenty of nightlife and a magnificent western art collection at the C.M. Russell Museum and original log cabin studio. One hour east is the friendly, central Montana community of Lewistown. There's something for everyone in this area, so load the sleds, pack the skis and bring the whole family out to Charlie Russell Country.

Trails: Popular loop trails are Divide Road, King's Hill and Big Loop, all with big powder play areas and unforgettable vistas that stretch all the way to the



Nearby Attractions: Showdown ski area, Silver Crest cross country ski area; C.M. Russell Complex; Lewis & Clark Trail; Missouri River.

Location: US 89 between Great Falls and White Sulphur Springs in central Montana. Nearest airports are Great Falls, 65 miles north, and Helena, 110 miles southwest on US 89 and 12.

Maps & Information: Pick up a copy of the current King's Hill/Little Belt trail map at businesses near the trail. For more information contact: King's Hill Ranger District, Lewis & Clark National Forest, 204 West Folsom, Box A, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645, (406) 547-3361; Great Falls Snowmobilers, Inc., Box 6032, Great Falls, MT 59406; Little Belt Snowmobile Club, Box 355, Hobson, MT 59452.



Coyote / Alan & Sandy Carey photo

RUSSELL COUNTRY LODGING

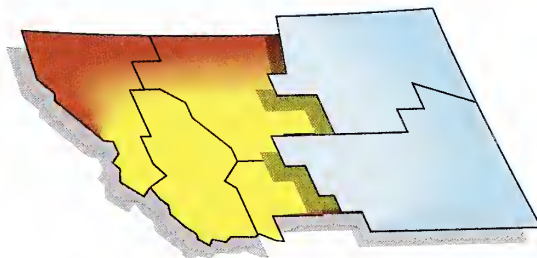
SOUTHFORK LODGE & GUEST RANCH, Utica, 59452, 374-2356. Snowmobile right to this secluded location on the Kings Hill/Little Belt Trail in the heart of Russell Country. All inclusive package catering to groups up to 25 for two- to seven-day trips, includes guide service. Reservations required. \$\$

Room rates are based on double occupancy for the 1989-90 Winter Season and are subject to change.

\$\$ Between \$40 and \$60



Missouri River and Custer Countries



Great rivers and lakes, badlands and buttes, unbelievably big sky and history by the mile are some of the attractions that draw winter visitors to eastern Montana. Lewis & Clark, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, General George Armstrong Custer and Calamity Jane were among the dazzling cast of characters that once scouted these high plains. Trace their steps and learn their stories at national historic sites like Custer Battlefield and Fort Union Trading Post and along the original highway West—the Missouri River. Base your exploration from friendly “Hi-Line” cities like Malta and Glasgow, busy interstate cities like Glendive, Miles City and Hardin, or Montana’s largest city, Billings, with its great restaurants, theaters, shopping and nightlife.

Winter sports are determined by weather conditions that differ dramatically from mountainous western Montana. Here, the season is short, generally from mid-January through February. Eastern Montana’s dry climate and plains terrain make for dry and drifting snow. These varying snow conditions and a shortage

of public lands limit snowmobiling, but there are two areas that are especially popular with local snowmobilers. Just outside the classic western cattleman’s town of Miles City, snowmobilers take to the frozen Tongue River starting at Spotted Eagle Recreation Area. This shallow river is normally covered by a thick layer of ice making it safe for snowmobiling, but it’s always a good idea to check on local conditions before heading out.

About 70 miles northeast on I-94, winter visitors can enjoy the unique experience of snowmobiling or skiing through 4,600 acres of badlands at Makoshika State Park, on the outskirts of Glendive. Depending on snow conditions, snowmobiling is allowed both on and off the eight miles of roads through the park.

Well-stocked, uncrowded lakes and reservoirs make ice fishing a hot sport on a cold day in eastern Montana. South of US 2, between Wolf Point and Glasgow is massive Fort Peck Lake with 1,500 miles of shoreline to give sportsmen and recreationists plenty of space. Popular game fish include walleye, sauger, trout, perch and northern pike. The state’s record walleye (14 pounds!) was caught at nearby Nelson Reservoir. South of Billings on the Crow Indian Reservation is beautiful Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. One of the nation’s premier trout streams, the Bighorn River is open all year. The lower Yellowstone River is also open year-round.

R. Hamilton Smith photo



Snowmobile

Winter recreationists are drawn to the mountains of Montana because of the deep, dry powder, spectacular vistas and solitude they know they will find. But any mountains in winter can be harsh and unforgiving. Mountain weather is unpredictable. Fast-moving storms can appear out of nowhere. Heavy snow or sustained wind can create avalanche danger. Overexposure to the cold can result in hypothermia—the number one killer of outdoor recreationists. The following information on snowmobile safety is offered in the hope that you will visit our trails, have a safe trip and great vacation and come back again. Once is not enough to enjoy all that Montana has to offer in winter.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

As a snowmobiler, you have a significant responsibility for your personal safety. It is your responsibility to be knowledgeable and informed about the basic operation of your machine and to operate your machine in a way that is safe and courteous to others. You should always operate your machine at a safe speed and be prepared to stop within one-half of your visible distance. Drinking is just as dangerous to snowmobilers as it is to motorists, their passengers and innocent victims. Always yield to slow-moving snowmobiles, pedestrians and skiers and avoid traveling on designated ski trails. It is your responsibility to protect Montana's backcountry environment for your own enjoyment and the enjoyment of others.

HAZARDS & RISKS

Even when you are on groomed snowmobile trails, hazards exist. The U.S.D.A. Forest Service, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Montana Snowmobile Association and local snowmobile clubs have installed signs and warnings to guide you. But it is impossible to keep recreationists informed on the status of millions of acres of forest and thousands of miles of trails. Snow conditions can change dramatically from day to day, even hour to hour. Be on the

lookout for rocks, stumps and fallen trees on and off the trail. Other potential hazards include caves and overlooks, abandoned mining tunnels and shafts, decaying structures and equipment, contaminated water, changing weather and trail conditions, landslides and avalanches, exhaustion and hypothermia.

IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT THERE ARE INHERENT RISKS TO THE SPORT OF SNOWMOBILING AND THE PRUDENT SNOWMOBILER SHOULD BE AWARE OF SUCH RISKS AND TAKE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS.



WINTER WEATHER

The snowmobile season generally extends from late November through March, with trail conditions improving as the season progresses. Temperatures can range from 50 degrees above zero to 50 below, but averages generally run from 15 to 25 degrees above zero, with mostly sunny skies. Storms can develop quickly and snowmobilers should be prepared for them:

- ✓ Check the forecast before you leave.
- ✓ Turn back if the weather looks bad.
- ✓ Let someone know where you're going and when you intend to return.
- ✓ Travel in a group of at least three people and two machines.
- ✓ Pack enough extra clothing, food and gear for a possible overnight.
- ✓ Be in good physical condition when you set out.

WINDCHILL

Wind can be a deadly enemy because of its cooling effect on already cold temperatures. This windchill chart illustrates the effect of wind and temperature on a dry, properly clothed person. If clothing is wet from perspiration or precipitation, the effect is even greater.

**Wind Speed Cooling Power of Wind
Expressed as
"Equivalent Chill Temperature"**

mph	Temperature (F)											
	40	30	20	10	5	0	-10	-20	-30	-40	-50	-60
Calm	Equivalent Chill Temperature											
5	35	25	15	5	0	-5	-15	-25	-35	-45	-55	-70
10	30	15	5	-10	-15	-20	-35	-45	-60	-70	-80	-95
15	25	10	-5	-20	-25	-30	-45	-60	-70	-85	-100	-110
20	20	5	-10	-25	-30	-35	-50	-65	-80	-95	-110	-120
25	15	0	-15	-30	-35	-45	-60	-75	-90	-105	-120	-135
30	10	0	-20	-30	-40	-50	-65	-80	-95	-110	-125	-140
35	10	-5	-20	-35	-40	-50	-65	-80	-100	-115	-130	-145
40	10	-5	-20	-35	-45	-55	-70	-85	-100	-115	-130	-150
Danger		Increased Danger (Flesh may freeze within 1 minute)				Great Danger (Flesh may freeze within 30 seconds)						

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is a loss of body temperature that is caused by exposure to cold and aggravated by wet, wind and exhaustion. If steps are not taken to raise the victim's body temperature, it leads to mental and physical collapse. Watch for these symptoms:

- ✓ Uncontrollable fits of shivering.
- ✓ Vague, slow, slurred speech.
- ✓ Memory lapses, incoherence.
- ✓ Immobility, fumbling hands.
- ✓ Frequent stumbling.
- ✓ Drowsiness, exhaustion.

To avoid hypothermia, stay dry. Insulate your body against cold, wet weather by wearing wool and waterproof clothing, including a knit cap. Put it on before you start shivering. If your clothing isn't enough to keep you warm, then get out of the cold. If you can't get out, build a fire and make camp while you still have energy. Don't wait until you're exhausted.

To treat hypothermia, shelter the victim and remove all wet clothing. Get them into warm, dry clothes, a warm, dry

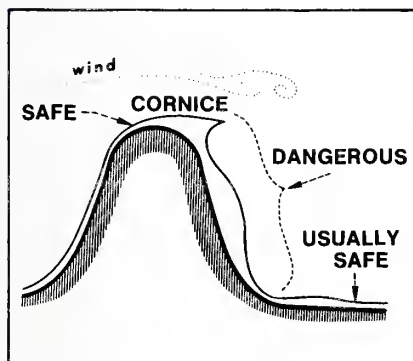
safety.

sleeping bag and try to get warm liquids into their body. Keep the victim awake. If the victim becomes sick or unconscious, seek medical attention immediately.

AVALANCHE

Avalanche danger cannot be taken too seriously because a wall of moving, suffocating snow leaves few survivors in its wake. The best way to avoid an avalanche is to be knowledgeable of avalanche conditions and reroute your trip to avoid them. Avalanches occur when loose snow or a slab of snow starts moving down a slope. Avalanches are triggered by a variety of slope, snow and weather conditions; many times they are triggered by human impact. Slope conditions to watch out for are steep slopes or smooth, open slopes. Short slopes can be as dangerous as long ones. Leeward slopes are dangerous because wind-deposited snow adds depth and may create unstable slabs of snow.

Avoid avalanches by staying away from mountainous terrain after heavy snowfall or prolonged periods of high wind. Avoid crossing steep side hills or entering narrow, steeply sided canyons. The safest routes are on ridgetops and on the windward side, away from cornices. The next safest route is out in the valley, far from the bottom of a slope.



AVALANCHE SURVIVAL

If you are caught in an avalanche:

- ✓ Call out so other members of your party can track your location.

- ✓ Discard all equipment and get away from your snowmobile.
- ✓ Make swimming motions and try to stay on top; work your way to the side of the avalanche.
- ✓ As you feel the avalanche slow, try to thrust your hand or any other part of your body above the surface.
- ✓ Before the snow settles, slip your arm in front of your face to clear an air space.
- ✓ Try not to panic; you need to preserve oxygen.

If you are a survivor, you are a victim's best hope of survival:

- ✓ Mark the place where you last saw the victim and keep your eyes fixed on the moving mass of snow in which he is trapped.
- ✓ Search for the victim directly down-slope from the last sighted area when the snow stops moving. Use a ski pole or stick to probe the snow.
- ✓ Stay with the victim unless help is only a few minutes away; after 30 minutes, the victim has only a 50 percent chance of survival.
- ✓ If the victim is found, treat for hypothermia, suffocation and shock.

AVALANCHES MAY OCCUR AT ANY TIME DURING THE WINTER. ADVICE ON AVALANCHE CONDITIONS IS AVAILABLE AT LOCAL FOREST SERVICE OFFICES.

AVALANCHE ADVISORY

Northwest Montana
(406) 257-8606

South Central Montana
(406) 587-9784

Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests
(406) 549-4488



FOR MORE INFORMATION

FISHING & HUNTING:

Dept. Fish, Wildlife & Parks,
1420 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59620,
(406) 444-2535. (Or see regional offices listed below.)

MONTANA TRAVEL INFORMATION:

Travel Montana, call toll free
1-800-541-1447. In Montana, call
(406) 444-2654.

NATIONAL PARKS, HISTORIC SITES & RECREATION AREAS:

National Park Service, Box 790, Deer Lodge, MT 59722, (406) 846-2070.

SNOWMOBILING:

Montana Snowmobile Association,
P.O. Box 3202, Great Falls, MT 59403.

U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Northern Region, Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807,
(406) 329-3511.

Dept. Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Headquarters, 1420 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59620, (406) 444-2535.

Regional Offices:

Region 1—Kalispell, P.O. Box 67, 3445 Hwy 93 South, Kalispell, MT 59903,
(406) 752-5501.

Region 2—Missoula, 3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59801,
(406) 542-5500.

Region 3—Bozeman, 1400 South 19th, Bozeman, MT 59715, (406) 994-4042.

Region 4—Great Falls, 4600 Giant Springs Road, P.O. Box 6609, Great Falls, MT 59406, (406) 454-3441.

Region 5—Billings, 1125 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings, MT 59105,
(406) 252-4654.

Region 6—Glasgow, Rural Route 1-4210, Glasgow, MT 59230, (406) 228-9347.

Region 7—Miles City, Rural Route 1, Box 2004, Miles City, MT 59301,
(406) 232-4365.

WEATHER REPORTS:

National Weather Service,
(406) 449-5204.



Perfect Any Way You Play!



G. Wiltse photo

Montana's nearly 3,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails will take you to places you've dreamed of ... the geysers and steamy hotpots of Yellowstone National Park, the edge of legendary parks and wilderness areas like Glacier and the Great Bear, a real ghost town with cabin rentals for winter visitors, backcountry lakes that are perfect for ice fishing and mountain peaks that touch the sky.

These mountain trails will take you to a wider world of winter sports in the northern Rockies. Take a day off the trail to test the slopes at one of Montana's destination ski resorts or day-use ski areas. Settle into a cozy cross country ski lodge and leave the rest of the world behind. See Old Faithful and Yellowstone's wintering wildlife on a guided snowcoach tour or chart your own winter tour choosing from hundreds of miles of groomed nordic trails in 10 national forests. If you've had it with crowded slopes, long lift lines, snarled traffic and inflated prices, then you're ready for the powder perfect, winter world of Montana.

In summer, snow retreats from the high country and gives way to pastel fields of bear-grass, glacier lilies, lupine and columbine. Ice recedes from alpine lakes and melting snow rushes down mountains to feed the rivers below. Snowmobiles and skis are replaced by RVs and fly rods. And thrill seekers head for white-water rivers instead of powder-white mountains. On the eastern Montana plains, the rodeo circuit draws top cowboys whose fortunes are tied to wild bulls and buckin'



M. Sample photo

horses and spectators whose search for the real West begins and ends in Montana. There are Indian powwows, ethnic festivals, museums and art galleries, scenic highways, blue ribbon trout streams, guest ranches and resorts, roadside RV parks, backcountry campgrounds, big city comforts and



Harley Hettick photo

small town hospitality. Summer in Montana is a celebration. Just for fun, we hope you'll join us.

Seeing Montana aboard a snowmobile is just the beginning. Clip this coupon and send it in for year 'round recreation information.

- ☐ Montana Winter Guide—32 pages of winter recreation, lodging, rates.
- ☐ Summer Vacation Planning Kit—40-page Vacation Guide, Highway Map and Travel Planner.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Mail Coupon To: Travel Montana
Room 996
Deer Lodge, MT 59722

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

Montana